New Statesman

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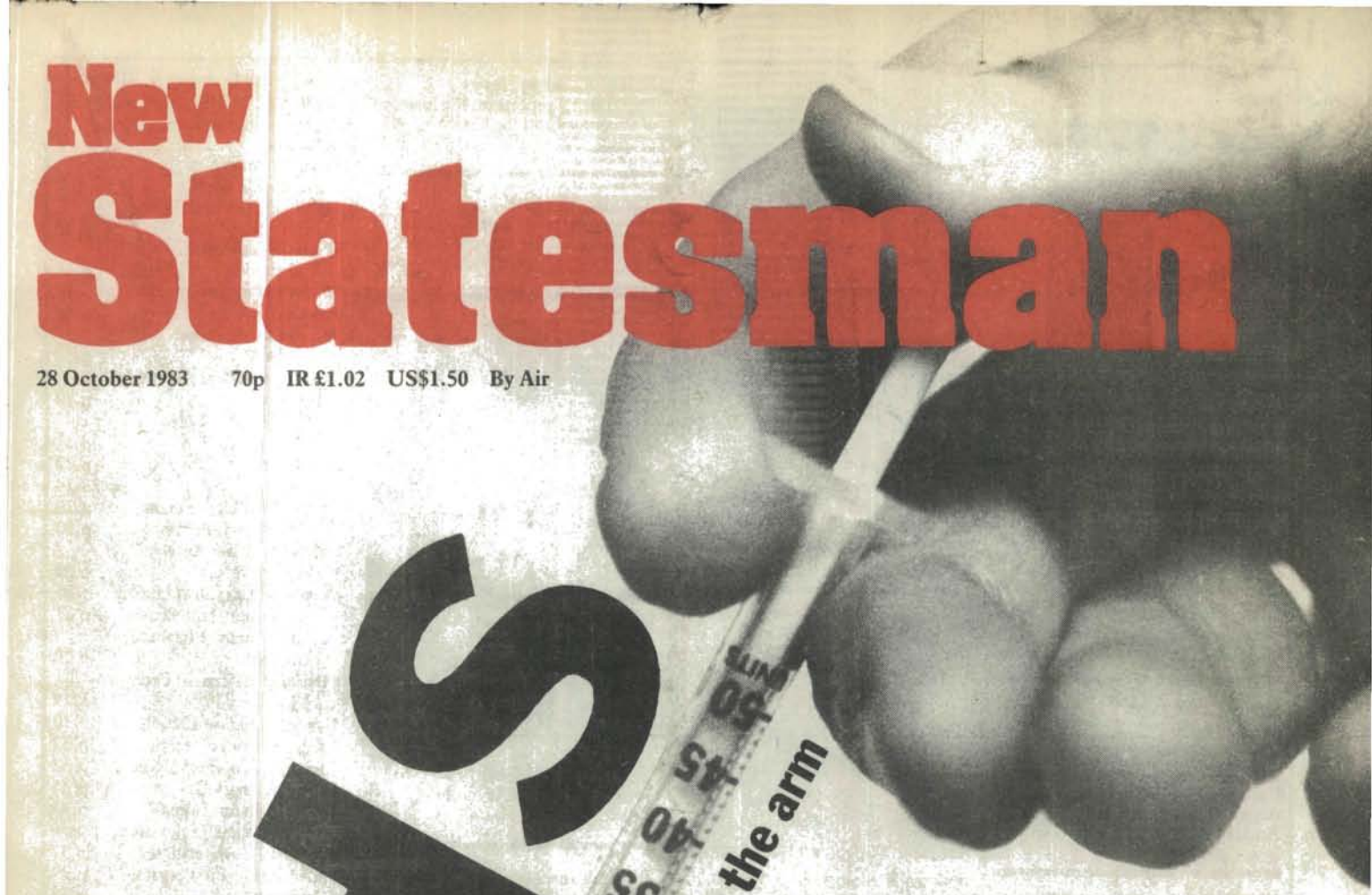

NHS

WANTED: £300 million shot in the arm

PLUS:

David Edgar's 'Maydays'

Jon Cook on Raymond Williams

C4's Crucible story

Duncan Campbell's dossier of police harassment

Beirut disaster

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New Statesman

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The Society of Civil and Public Servants is organising a conference on:

THE POLYGRAPH, SECURITY PROCEDURES AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Tuesday, 6 December, 10.30am-5pm
Waterloo Room, Royal Festival Hall, London SE1

Guest Speaker: Professor David Lykken, *University of Minnesota, expert on polygraph screening.*

The Government is about to launch a pilot scheme to test the feasibility of polygraph *(lie detector)* screening at GCHQ, Cheltenham.

This pilot scheme represents the first serious use of polygraph screening in Britain and therefore has implications reaching beyond the Civil Service. Experience in the USA suggests that, once introduced, polygraph screening will spread throughout the Civil Service and into private sector commerce and industry.

The SCPS believes that the scientific controversy surrounding polygraph screening, its current applications in the USA, and implications for civil liberties, require urgent discussion.

Admission to the Conference will be by ticket only. (Price £2 incl. buffet lunch.) Interested organisations and individuals should apply for tickets, and further details, from:

Ann Lawrence
SCPS, 124-130 Southwark Street
London SE1 0TU
Tel: 01-928 9671, Ext 242

society of civil & public servants

National Campaign Against the Police Bill

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE POLICE BILL AND POLICING STRATEGIES IN THE 1980s

- Provisions of the Bill
- Political Context
- Lessons of Ireland
- The Black Experience
- Multi-Agency Policing & Newman
- Organising to defeat the Bill

SAT. 19 NOV. 1983 9.30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sir William Collins School
Charrington St., London, NW1, nr Euston

Details of Conference, NCAPB membership:
NCAPB, 50 Rectory Road
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New Statesman Vol 106 No 2745 28 October 1983

Reagan's outrageous invasion

IT IS A MEASURE of the canyon that is opening up between the Reagan Administration and public opinion in Western Europe that a Pentagon spokesman could formally express 'a deep sense of outrage' at Mrs Thatcher's refusal to join the Amerian invasion of Grenada. It is a measure of the extent to which American foreign policy is now in the hands of the military that State Department officials were clearly kept in the dark about American plans until the last moment, telling (for example) the British government over last weekend that no invasion was imminent, when planning and execution of the invasion were clearly at an advanced stage.

The deep sense of outrage is in the reverse direction. It should be felt most by those who over the years have looked for at least a slightly more principled approach to foreign policy from the United States than from the Soviet Union. For those who have argued that there is nothing to choose between the super powers (or that American foreign and military policy is consistently the more aggressive) the Grenada invasion will provide an argument that will be hard to counter. The propaganda capital that the United States has led the West in making out of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is now shown up as pure hypocrisy. And in Afghanistan, to put it at its lowest, the Russians have for a century and more had a close strategic interest.

There are rare occasions when military action against another state is justified. Most people would argue that the Tanzanian invasion to overthrow Uganda's Amin, for example, was morally justified. And the same applies to the Israeli action in freeing the hostages at Entebbe airport. But the reasons given by President Reagan for the invasion were transparently bogus. Imminent dangers to the lives of American citizens *would* have been a legitimate reason for planning a rescue, involving the minimum reasonable use of force if necessary. But there was no such danger. Negotiations for the release of those who wished to leave were progressingly satisfactorily. The decision was taken for quite other reasons.

The Reagan Administration is now clearly in the hands of those whose vision and analysis of foreign policy is crass. It sees everything in terms of a struggle to the death between those parts of the world that accept American leadership and the forces of evil, as represented not by communism itself, but by the Soviet Union. (It must be very difficult for the old politicians and bureaucrats of the Kremlin to understand the pride of place that they have been allotted in this demonology.) In the Caribbean, the prime agent of this evil is, of course, Cuba and the ideological vehicle Marxism.

The Reagan Administration is also on the last lap of its first term. In the context of its demonology it needs to show its supporters at home that it can score direct hits against the Soviet Union and Marxism. It has not been having much recent success on that front. In particular, in the Middle East it was led by the nose by the Begin government into the Lebanese disaster. The latest Beirut bombings risk generating strong political pressure at home for a humiliating pull-out.

To those around Reagan who simply want to score something to be presented as a blow for the 'American way of life', Central America must now seem a much softer option than the Middle East. And for months Grenada must have seemed the softest option of them all. The treatment deliberately handed out to Bishop earlier this year contributed to his overthrow and murder. The crudity of the analysis that led to the conclusion that the New Jewel Movement should be undermined must make an older generation of American foreign policy-makers squirm with embarrassment and shame. The government of Bishop replaced a corrupt and dictatorial regime which inherited independence. It was energetic in pushing through experiments in social and economic reform that are so urgently required in so many parts of the world. It called itself a revolutionary and Marxist government. But it quaintly kept the Queen as Head of State and both the middle class and extensive private enterprise continued to exist. The average Grenadan was better off under Bishop than ever before and (thanks to President Reagan) better off than he or she is now likely to be for many years.

But in March, President Reagan chose to denouce little Grenada as a dangerous citadel of Soviet-Cuban subversion, while Bishop was away at the non-aligned summit in Delhi. The rumours of American attack gave the island's militia a sudden importance which continued in the following months. Even then, Bishop went to Washington to offer formally to reduce his relationship with Cuba, to undertake that there would be no Soviet or Cuban bases on the island and that private enterprise would be protected. But Bishop was quite simply humiliated by the Administration. That humiliation fatally weakened his position against the hardliners within his People's Revolutionary Government, who were arguing strongly against any compromise with the United States.

If domestic opinion and America's allies allow President Reagan to get away with this act of aggression, those around him will undoubtedly press for the next most easy target – the reformist government of Nicaragua. The massive deployment of American ground forces in and around Central America can only be seen as preparations for a war between Honduras and Nicaragua.

It is terrifying to observe that American foreign policy is now in the hands of advisers possessed of a single-minded anti-Soviet obsession. The Geneva arms talks have not been conducted in good faith, because those in charge of them start from the premise that it is impossible to trust a Russian unless you have got him on his knees.

The man now closest to the President on foreign policy in the White House is his new National Security Adviser, Colonel Robert McFarlane. Of a previous American act of piracy – the use of force to release the crew of the captured American ship Mayaguez in 1975 – McFarlane has written:

> The US actions in the Mayaguez crisis produced the release of the crew through compellence (sic), the demonstration of decision making and popular resolve through the use of force and the enhancement of US credibility in the minds of adversaries.

If such attitudes continue to dominate American foreign policy, the post-war Western alliance will disintegrate. □

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Home Office creeps out of its bunker

NEW GOVERNMENT civil defence regulations, intended to compel 'nuclear free' local authorities to make war plans, build nuclear bunkers for officials, and take part in government-sponsored defence exercises are being debated in the House of Commons this week (Wednesday). They will come into effect on 1 December.

Last week, the Home Office launched a new campaign to publicise their civil defence activities and invited selected journalists to an 'unattributable' briefing where they distributed a new publicity booklet – *Civil Defence – the basic facts*. The public can apparently confirm these facts because, as the booklet declares, the Home Office has released 60 official circulars and publications for public scrutiny.

They do not, however, include circulars concerning police war training, plans for police and troops to protect 'key points' against disorder, or details of official communications plans – in particular British Telecom's Telephone Preference Scheme, built into telephone exchanges so non-official telephones can be quickly disconnected.

The 50-page booklet contains significant omissions and 'facts' which are contradicted by internal government documents – some of which, ironically, are now available to the public:

● The Home Office has admitted for the first time that opponents of the goverment will be arrested and interned in war: 'Action would be taken, as in 1939-45, only against people considered to be a significant threat to national security'. But newly released Home Office documents show that this category could include anyone who disagrees with the government's decision to go to war. *Home Defence Planning Assumptions*, written in 1973, says that the first objective of Home Defence planning is to take 'measures necessary . . . to secure the United Kingdom against any internal threat'. The *Training Manual for Scientific Advisers* says that the 'internal threat' includes people who show an 'adverse public reaction to government policy' as well as 'subversives' who attack the *status quo*.

● The booklet admits for the first time that there is a network of once-secret roads, called 'Essential Service Routes', which would be sealed off in the event of attack. But the government's 'stay put' policy is said to be advisory only, and there is 'no intention to enforce it . . . by the use of police . . .'

In fact, the (still secret) *Police Manual of Home Defence*, says the routes, which include most major roads and ring roads 'should be kept clear of refugees and non-essential traffic. The police would give priority to keeping these roads open . . .'

Nor does the Home Office mention that petrol pumps would be 'frozen' under police guard, or that refugees would be denied emergency food supplies. The Home Office circular on food supplies (ES1/79), which is available to the public), says that:

> There would be no question of implementing emergency feeding during the pre-attack period for those who chose to ignore the government's advice to stay in their own homes.

● In the new booklet, the Home Office pretends that it was not involved in the 1980 civil defence exercise 'Square Leg'. During the exercise, there was a highly realistic simulated nuclear attack in which over 200 Megatons of nuclear weapons destroyed most cities and military target areas in Britain. This sort of attack would quickly kill more than 70 per cent of the population and render all civil defence useless. So the Home Office is now claiming that 'This was *not* a civil defence exercise'.

This claim is not true. The Home Office, and not the Ministry of Defence, widely publicised the exercise; a press release announcing a visit by Leon Brittan to a series of government bunkers was headed 'Home Office Minister will observe civil defence exercise'. Journalists were invited to the Home Office bunker Sub Regional Headquarters in Basingstoke by a letter which said 'civil defence exercise Square Leg – thank you for your interest'.

● Another 'basic fact' is the assertion that 'all possible [medical] care' will be provided for survivors, implying that they will be cared for. But the Home Office's own circular on the 'Health Service in War' (ES1/77) points out that most medical care will be *impossible*.

Home Office spending on civil defence has grown rapidly and is now about £69 million a year. But most of this money has been spent on building and refurbishing central government bunker headquarters and on communications and radiation monitoring equipment. No money is being spent on building shelters for the public, on rescue services, or on preparing evacuation plans for people living in or near major target areas. These ideas have been considered, but were rejected by a Cabinet committee a year ago. The booklet makes it clear that large sums of money cannot be spent on civil defence because the money goes instead to nuclear weapons.

Duncan Campbell

A second edition of Duncan Campbell's book on British civil defence plans, WAR PLAN UK, *will be published at the end of November by Paladin Books. The Home Office circulars, which are now free to the public, can be obtained by writing to Room 659, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1H 9AT.*

Andrew Ward/Report

GUESSING the numbers on the weekend's disarmament demos would seem to be a lottery – except that police and right-wing papers always offer a lower figure than liberal or radical papers. The Guardian *offered 400,000, BBC 200,000,* News of the World *150,000, and the* Mail on Sunday *found police who had counted only 100,000. Police didn't seem to find counting the numbers arrested much easier. The* Guardian *and* Daily Telegraph *reported it was 26, the* Sunday Express *17,* News of the World *eight and* Mail on Sunday *a mere two. Across Europe, the turnout both 'exceeded the organisers' expectations. An estimated 2 million people'* (Observer) *and 'fell short of the 2 million the organisers had predicted'* (Sunday Times). *But, forget about the numbers, what did it all mean? 'Sunset for CND' pronounced the* Sunday Times; *'chaos at march' said the* Sunday Express; *'chaos at nuclear protest' echoed the* Daily Mail; *'missiles snarl up' said the* Sun. *Not so much the legitimate expression of mass popular opinion, as an irritating interference for the Saturday motorist and shopper.* New Statespersons *turned up for themselves.*

(Press information: *John Minnion*)

Hunting the 'IRA camp'

'GADAFFI CAMP That Trains the IRA Killers' was the dramatic headline on a lengthy and 'exclusive' story in the *Mail on Sunday* on 25 September. The piece was by none other than Gloria Stewart, the freelance journalist whose exploits have been chronicled in the last three issues of the *NS*.

Ms Stewart came up with an extraordinary tale alleging that Libya has secretly been training 'hundreds' of IRA terrorists at two camps near Tripoli. The sole source for the story was given as Alexander Robertson, a British businessman who said that he had seen the camps while in Libya negotiating a £25 million warehouse contract for a Midlands construction company.

Mr Robertson gave a striking account of his encounter with the IRA in Libya. Approaching two men speaking with Irish accents, he had said: 'What are you guys doing out here in the middle of nowhere?' One of them blandly replied: 'We're with the IRA . . . Who else would be in this god-forsaken place, where you can't get a beer!'

Mr Robertson claimed that a Libyan engineer at one of the terrorist camps had told him: 'Our aim is to subvert all anti-socialist West European governments. Our killers are gunning down politicians all round the world . . . We have been training members of the IRA here for about a year. We have had hundreds of them through here.'

The story came complete with a sketch of one of the camps, and an identikit-style drawing of 'Fergus Finnerty', identified by Robertson

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as an IRA man. According to Robertson, one of the secret IRA camps was at Tajura, on the coast ten miles east of Tripoli. The other was said to be 'four miles away'.

There is not a shred of evidence to support Robertson's claims. The Foreign Office says it 'has no reason to believe that members of the IRA are being trained in Libya'. This has been confirmed by security sources, and by the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Massey-Ferguson, the multinational agricultural equipment manufacturer, is involved in a tractor assembly operation at Tajura, and has two staff members at the plant. Company spokesperson Tony Dawe said: 'Our business operations manager responsible visits the plant regularly. He tells me that he has never seen or heard any indication of any such IRA training operation anywhere in Tajura.'

At first it was thought – wrongly – that Ms Stewart and the *Mail on Sunday* might have been

Daily Mail

Alexander 'Robertson' Taylor

taken for a ride by one Joe Flynn, a notorious confidence trickster who has often made money out of the press in exchange for similarly bizarre 'revelations'. This suggestion was forcefully rejected by Ms Stewart: 'I'm happy with my story and so is the *Mail on Sunday*.'

The *Mail on Sunday* was in fact less confident than Ms Stewart had supposed. Associate editor Jonathan Holborow offered to commission an exposé of her story, adding that the *Mail on Sunday* could offer a better financial deal than any other paper.

Later, Holborow changed his tune. Saying that he had conferred with Robertson and one of Robertson's business associates, he threatened legal action if anything was printed which suggested that Robertson was Joe Flynn.

'Alexander Robertson' is in fact Alexander Taylor (whose middle name is Robertson), who was company secretary of A. R. Taylor Engineering Ltd, in which capacity he had been in Libya on warehouse business. However, two contracts in which his company played a key role went very badly wrong, with grave implications for other firms and individuals involved. Two of these – the Greek-registered International Contractors Company, and the long-established Leicestershire firm of Matterson & Sons – were forced into liquidation. About 35 jobs were lost when Matterson closed.

Eric Mason, a British manager with International Contractors Company, had gone to Libya to try to sort out the mess surrounding one of these contracts. Pending the satisfactory completion of the warehouse, the Libyan authorities held Mr Mason's passport. He was separated from his family in Kent for 13 months.

While this was going on, Alexander Taylor, operating as a shareholder in a newly-formed company, Whitwick Taylor Ltd, continued to seek business in Libya. Mr Taylor has since been bought out of this firm, and no longer has any financial interest in it.

A. R. Taylor Engineering Ltd, which is now in liquidation, was a £100 company in which Mr Taylor owned half the shares. The rest were owned by an outfit called Mexwise Ltd, which in turn is owned by the family of one David A. Fardell, who was managing director of A. R. Taylor Engineering Ltd.

Mr Fardell has been in police custody since March this year, and Folkestone magistrates have just committed him for trial on a number of charges. Alexander Taylor, who has not been charged, has been extensively interviewed by the Fraud Squad in connection with these matters, and is expected to be an important prosecution witness.

Mr Taylor (or 'Robertson') has not given us his side of the story. His business telephone in Freshwater, on the Isle of Wight, has been disconnected, and he has not made use of the number he has been given to contact us. When we spoke to Gloria Stewart about Mr Taylor she said: 'I'm not really interested in his business partners and I've got nothing to say,' before slamming the receiver down.

Alan George

Alan George is a freelance journalist. He also works for the PR firm, The Main Event, one of whose clients is the Libyan People's Bureau.

MISCELLANY

Shadow boxing

Whither the authority of *Tribune*? On 2 September it issued this warning to inside left MPs over Labour's deputy leadership election: 'Do not imagine you can vote for Hattersley *and* expect to find yourself on the left-wing slate for the Shadow Cabinet.' Well, this week, the Tribune Group of MPs published their slate for the shadow cabinet elections. The ten names included the following: Norman Buchan, Robin Cook, Robert Hughes, Stan Orme, Clive Soley and Jack Straw. All six voted for Hattersley.

Deal winner

Andrew Neil, the new editor of the *Sunday Times*, is looking for a Communications Editor who will write about 'sunrise industries' such as cable and satellite TV. As our regular readers will know, Andrew Neil – whose name, by the way, is an anagram of 'deal winner' – is so excited by these industries that he was until recently a partner in National Economic Research Associates, a consultancy firm which campaigns for 'deregulation' of utilities such as cable TV. Neil told the *Guardian* last week that he had resigned from NERA on the day he accepted the *Sunday Times* job, because 'there would have been a potential conflict of interest'. Very noble and sensible of him. Hang on, though. Under his editorship, the *Economist*'s UK section was stuffed with articles about cable and satellite TV while he was still involved in NERA.

Hail to the chief

Here's a rum do. On Sunday night an ITV announcer informed viewers that the edition of *Clive James on Television* which they were about to see was not the same as the one listed in *TV Times*: 'The scheduled programme dealt in a humorous way with the American way of life but we felt in view of today's events in Beirut it would be inappropriate.' What was shown instead was . . . another edition in which Clive James made fun of the American way of life. So why the switch? In fact, the announcer had been disingenuous: the scheduled programme had dealt not just with 'the American way of life' but specifically with American Presidents. London Weekend TV apparently felt that after the slaughter in Beirut it was fine to go on sneering at ordinary Americans, but nothing should be done which might diminish the stature of Ronald Reagan. We trust he was properly grateful.

Green fingers

Troubles do tend to come in clusters and here's just one more that will bring ridicule to favoured Tory beliefs. Wandsworth's Tory Council, stronghold of 'if it moves privatise it', has had to sack Pritchards from the garden maintenance contract. This is because the firm, which was already in deep trouble over the contract last August, failed to improve by the deadline of 21 October. After six months of its five year, £1.75m contract, it had run up 17,942 penalty points costing the firm £138,000. Pritchard's also lost its grass verge maintenance contract in Tory Kingston in the summer. An embarrassed Wandsworth Council says they are still very satisfied with Pritchard's performance in emptying dustbins.

Paper boy

David Dimbleby's image has taken a bit of a battering in the dispute at his group of newspapers in Richmond. Now comes news of the only paper owned by Dimbleby which is not yet directly affected by the dispute, the *Wandsworth Borough News*. Earlier this year, Dimbleby took advantage of the stone-age industrial relations set-up at the paper by encouraging the staff to join an organisation called the Printing Trades Alliance (PTA). Known by some of its members as the 'sweetheart' union, this little-known combo is roughly to the NGA what the Institute of Journalists is to the NUJ – reviled. Dimbleby managed to persuade almost all his staff to enrol, including printers, advertising and clerical staff, the editor, the tea lady and the paper's handyman. Even more surprisingly, Dimbleby has himself paid his staff's subscriptions to the 'union'. As a result the paper's NGA membership is now just two strong, and Dimbleby has effectively isolated his subservient printers in Wandsworth from their more militant colleagues in Richmond. This boy will go far.

My Lady's chamber

Lady 'Tesco' Porter continues her triumphal reign at Westminster City Council. The third full council meeting under her Tory leadership was marked by a half-day strike of council employees and the appearance of 350 Nalgo pickets on the doorstep of city hall, in protest against Conservative plans to close four Westminster libraries and privatise part of the architects' department. Inside the meeting, the Tories were embarrassed to find that a Labour councillor had obtained a report from the council's internal information system, detailing the £230,000 saved last year by using council architects rather than private firms; nevertheless, a decision was taken to privatise more architectural work. Outside the meeting, all the incoming Tory councillors were roundly heckled.

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Charge and counter in Welsh trial

A DEFENCE barrister in the Welsh explosives conspiracy trial at Cardiff Crown Court has accused the prosecution of trying to turn the proceedings into a political trial. In a 15-minute address to the court before opening his case Michael Mansfield described prosecution questions relating to the defendants' politics as 'quite irrelevant'.

He told the jury his client, David Burns, was 'not charged with possessing political beliefs' and said the case was about whether 'these men have actually agreed to do anything or done anything illegal'. At the beginning of the trial, now in its seventh week, Gareth Williams QC, prosecuting, said the defendants' politics formed a part of the 'background to the case'.

Only five of the original eight defendants remain in the dock. Gareth Westacott failed to appear on the first day and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. After three weeks Dafydd Ladd changed his plea to 'guilty' and secured the release of his co-defendant and girlfriend Jenny Smith by taking responsibility for 'explosive substances' they were both charged with possessing. The conspiracy charge against Ladd was dropped and he will now be sentenced at the end of the trial.

The defence evidence has included a catalogue of allegations of violence, bribery and fabrication of evidence against South Wales and West Midlands police. Burns alleges Detective Inspector Stewart Lewis of South Wales CID slapped him and pulled his hair during questioning in custody in October 1981. Another defendant, Adrian Stone, claims Lewis told him he 'could come up smelling of roses and even walk out with a little bit of money in his pocket' if he would co-operate.

Stone also accused DCI Gordon Smith of South Wales CID of threatening to 'fit him up' and saying he had done so to other people. A West Midlands officer, Detective Inspector Arthur Rickerby, is accused by Burns of hitting him on the head during questioning, kicking him in the ribs and emptying an ashtray over his head.

Nicholas Hodges and Stone both claimed they were not allowed to see solicitors when they were arrested, which Hodges' solicitor confirmed in court.

The three of the accused who have given evidence claim that admissions they supposedly made to police concerning bombing attacks were made under duress or fabricated. The police have denied all the allegations in court and have produced notes and transcripts they claim were made at the time to support their denials.

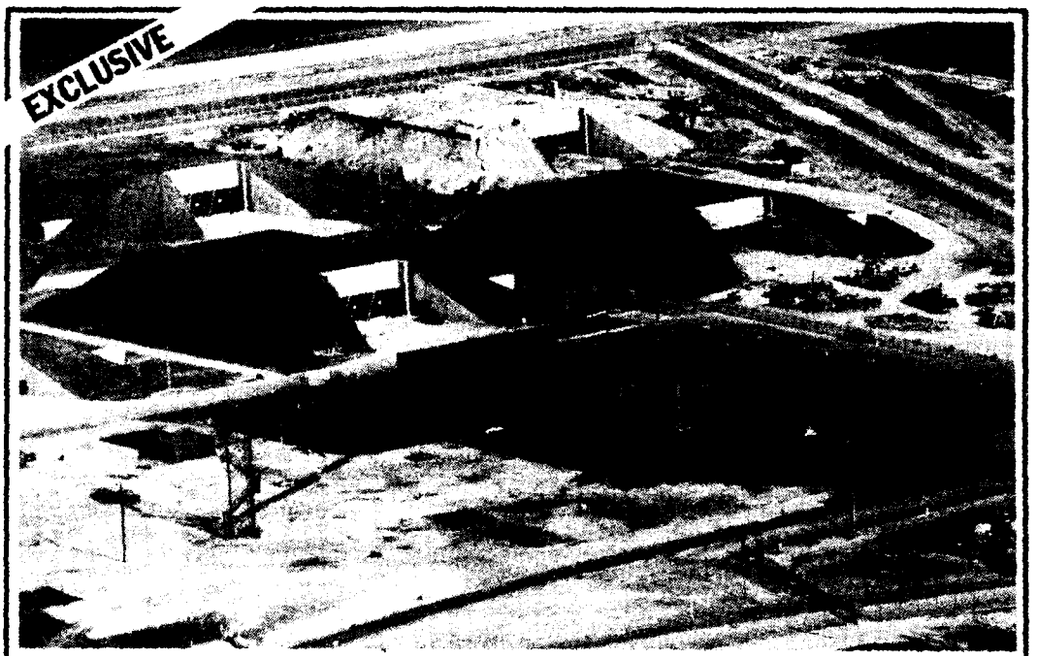
All five in the dock face charges of conspiring to damage or destroy property and various individual charges of possessing explosives or intent to cause explosions. Robert Griffiths is also charged with assisting Burns to avoid arrest. The charges relate to thirteen bombing attacks between March 1980 and 1982 and much of the prosecution has been devoted to showing that these form a series.

But Michael Mansfield has said 'they barely hang together as a series' and that scientific evidence used to link them should logically have meant the inclusion of more than a hundred other attacks during that period. However, three forensic science experts independently claimed that at least seven of the incidents cited do form a series.

The accused have not conducted their defences in concert and at one point the judge, Mr Justice Farquharson, questioned Hodges over a statement he made to police implicating Stone which he later withdrew. Hodges agreed it was 'a terrible thing to have done'. But he still claims Stone asked him to supply nitric acid and said it could be used to make a bomb.

The trial has attracted relatively little publicity in the English language media and demonstrations have been sparsely attended.

Kieran Daly



Cruise missile base nears completion

Only one of the six silos or 'shelters' for ground-launched cruise missiles (four of which are visible here) was complete last weekend when this photograph was taken. Three silos are still fenced off so that construction workers can finish them while the rest of the missile base becomes operational. The first silo is due to be filled with the first 'flight' of 16 missiles on a date before 15 December – two weeks before they are due to reach an interim 'operational capability'. In front of the silos are the missile assembly and maintenance building, a 60-foot high guardtower and a 'special operations facility'. Behind the silos is Greenham Common's runway, where heavy transport planes carrying the missiles, transporters and launch control centres will land. Airspace around Greenham Common has been restricted since mid-October, to facilitate the transport flights. The Guardian *has suggested that the missiles were originally scheduled to arrive on 1 November.*

Duncan Campbell

Council scoreboard

22 September

Cardiff DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Dorset CC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Castle Point DC	LAB GAIN (Con)
Falkirk DC	SNP GAIN (Lab)
Islwyn DC	Lab hold
Chiltern DC	Con hold
Westminster LBC	Con hold
Caradon DC	Ind hold

29 September

Arun DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
East Hampshire DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
East Hampshire DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Waltham Forest LBC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
N. Tyneside MBC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
St Helens MBC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Lincoln DC	Lab hold
W. Midlands CC	Lab hold
N. Tyneside MBC	Lab hold
Bury MBC	Lab hold
Bury MBC	Lab hold
Notts CC	Lab hold
Notts CC	Con hold
Tendring DC	Con hold
Middlesbrough DC	Con hold
Sheffield MBC	Con hold
Sheffield MBC	Con hold
Ealing LBC	Lib hold

6 October

BedfordshireCC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Rochdale MBC	Lab hold
W. Sussex CC	Lab hold
Ryedale DC	Con hold
W. Sussex CC	Con hold

13 October

Wandsworth LBC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Isle of Wight CC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Essex CC	Con hold

20 October

Carrick DC	IND GAIN (SDP)
Pendle DC	LAB GAIN (Lib)
Burnley MBC	LAB GAIN (Con)
Bucks CC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Notts CC	Lab hold
Leicestershire CC	Lab hold
Haringey LBC	Lab hold
Wolverhampton MBC	Lab hold
Sandwell DC	Lab hold
Dudley MBC	Lab hold
Dundee DC	Con hold
Leics. CC	Con hold
Leics. CC	Con hold
Oxon CC	Con hold
York DC	Lib hold

N.B. In our last scoreboard (23 Sept) we listed a by-election at Oswestry as a 'Lab hold'. In fact it was a Labour gain – of sorts. In May only two candidates contested the three-seat ward; a by-election was held seven weeks later to fill the third place.

CC: County Council; DC: District Council; LBC: London Borough Council; City: City Council; GLC: Greater London Council

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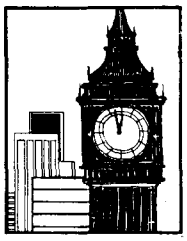

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

The week Neil Kinnock began the rest of his life

THIS THURSDAY, after this issue of the *New Statesman* has gone to press, Neil Kinnock will face his third challenge in three days. We shall deal with the first two later; for the time being it is enough to observe that on Monday Parliament returned from its summer hols, so it has been Kinnock's first week for observing the world, the House of Commons, and the glacial expression on Margaret Thatcher's face from the Opposition leader's seat on the front bench.

All in all, it could not have been a better week for savouring the experience, as ministers displayed exquisite embarrassment over the invasion of Grenada. But, even as Denis Healey extracts every possible ounce of advantage from the government's disarray, other concerns preoccupy Labour's new leader. For him the essential tactical benefit of the Grenada invasion is that it provides a smokescreen behind which he can meet his early challenges without an excessive glare of publicity.

On Thursday night the results of three by-elections taking place in the London borough of Islington will be announced. Labour is defending all three and is expected to suffer losses. As Simon Hoggart (who devoted the whole of last Sunday's political column in the *Observer* to these three by-elections) noted, the results will be watched with more than usual interest for two reasons. The first is that Islington has replaced Lambeth as 'The Left-Wing Council The Right-Wing Media Love To Hate'; the second is that Islington houses more journalists per square mile than anywhere else in Britain – and possibly anywhere else in the universe.

If Labour does badly in Islington, all manner of generalised assertions will be made about the 'true' state of the Labour vote, the revival of the SDP and so on. Much will be made of Labour's euphoria evaporating, Kinnock's bubble bursting and the party's support peaking. Conversely, if Labour holds all three seats comfortably, the air will be thick with claims that Labour is on the way again and that the SDP is finished.

Either of these positions would be false. It may be possible to draw some lessons about voters' perceptions of an unusually controversial Labour council, but little more. The autumn is the peak season for council by-elections. Between September and mid-December, 30 to 40 are held each month. They are scattered throughout Britain. By looking at a spread of results it is possible to draw some conclusions about the state of public opinion. The significance of council (or for that matter parliamentary) by-elections taking place in a single area on a single day is largely symbolic. Not that symbolism is unimportant; but symbolism should not be mistaken for psephology.

So let us put aside for one moment the question of what the electors of Barnsbury, St Peter's and Holloway wards think of Islington council and look instead at the overall pattern of by-elections fought since Kinnock was elected party leader. The pattern is not without interest. Labour is ahead.

In the past three weeks, 23 by-elections have been fought. Twenty-one of them have been three-cornered contests involving Labour, Conservative and Alliance candidates. In those 21 elections almost 50,000 votes have been cast. They were distributed as follows:

Labour	18,331	37.5%
Conservative	17,572	36.0%
Liberal/SDP	11,972	24.5%
Others	990	2.0%

Compared with by-elections fought between June and September these figures suggest an increase of nine per cent for Labour, a decline of two per cent for the Conservatives, and a fall of seven per cent for the Alliance. This pattern is directly in line with movements in opinion poll ratings over the same period: as always, the Alliance is performing a little better, and the Tories a little worse, in by-elections than in the opinion polls.

This is the first time since we started monitoring local by-elections, in the summer of 1981, that Labour has taken a lead – although it would be unwise to make too much of a 1½ per cent gap. As much to the point is the fact that Labour has now started holding its own in the gains and losses table – while the Conservatives have not gained a seat since 22 September. Overall, between 6 and 20 October, Labour won 10 seats (gained 2, lost 2), the Conservatives won seven (lost 3) and the Alliance won five (gained 4, lost 2).

IF RECENT VOTING figures provide good news for Labour, this week's rows in the Commons over Grenada have been almost as helpful. President Reagan may not have had Mrs Thatcher's interests at heart when he decided to mount the invasion, but he has acted as if he wanted to give Neil Kinnock the best possible start.

Whenever a new Opposition leader is elected, one of his or her hardest tasks is to emerge unscathed from the first engagements in Parliament – at Prime Minister's Question Time, and in the first full-scale debate opened by the new Opposition leader. Both are artificial occasions, but they matter. They matter especially to Labour now, as the party's hopes of sustaining its recent recovery are largely invested in projecting Kinnock as a plausible leader.

Kinnock's first two challenges this week were PM's Question Time on Tuesday and the health service debate on Thursday. His main objective was survival rather than triumph. 'What we would really like is for it to be an anticlimax', was the private view in the Kinnock camp before Tuesday.

It could not have worked out better. The MP's and journalists' seats at 3.15pm on Tuesday were as full as on budget day; everyone watched Kinnock with rare intensity, either hoping of fearing that Thatcher would destroy his questions, his credibility and his larynx. In the event it turned out to be the low-key exchange Kinnock had intended; but just as we were all pondering its significance, up popped Sir Geoffrey Howe who promptly made a complete fool of himself.

When Howe completed his statement on Grenada, Denis Healey mauled him with abandon. Kinnock's role, it appeared, had been to act as Healey's warm-up man. But no matter: by courtesy of the US President, Labour was able to mount a Kinnock-Healey act that left the Tory benches after an hour looking more like a defeated and demoralised band of unwilling conscripts than a victorious political army. Wednesday went no better for the Tories; and once again Kinnock could learn more of the skills of party leadership gratefully watching the spotlight trained elsewhere. There may be other occasions for the Tories to engage Kinnock in battle; but never again will they have the golden opportunity of slaying him on his first appearance.

Meanwhile, all Kinnock's other problems remain to be tackled: how to make the new shadow cabinet function effectively: how to overhaul the party's organisation at its Walworth Road headquarters; how to solve policy disputes over issues such as defence, Europe and the economy. The significance of what has happened this week is that the government has been upstaged by yet another short-term fiasco. Whatever the long-term consequences of the Grenada invasion for Anglo-American relations, the consequences for Labour could be highly beneficial. Kinnock has won a little more time, free from the immediate danger of being savaged by Thatcher , to tackle Labour's problems. Just as General Galtieri was the unofficial patron saint of this year's Tory election campaign; so President Reagan may become Labour's unofficial saviour between now and 1988. □

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Unsafe in their hands

John Rentoul examines one health authority's experience under a government that claims to be spending more 'in real terms' on our health services

AT THE END of last month, Norman Fowler announced a 'reduction in NHS staffing' of 0.6 per cent – or 5,000 jobs. His statement went on to say that 'this has been no "new round of cuts" . . . we are still spending more in real terms on the NHS this year than ever before'. But how can the government be spending more on the health service 'in real terms' when wards are closing and jobs being lost?

Perhaps Mr Fowler's most disgraceful deception has been to pretend that the answer is simple. Despite the fact that more *money* is being spent on the NHS, even allowing for inflation, the NHS has reached a crisis where the total national provision of health services will probably deteriorate this year for the first time.

This year, the government is planning to spend £12.8 billion on the health service in England – 4.9 per cent more than last year, compared with a rise in the Retail Price Index of 4 per cent in the year to April 1983. Leaving aside the suitability of using the RPI to establish the level of 'real' increase in NHS spending, it is clear that this 0.9 per cent 'real' increase will be absorbed by the NHS wages bill.

But Mr Fowler can't even claim to be spending the *same* 'in real terms' this year as compared with 1982/83, without an important qualification. In July – four months into the current financial year – the new Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, announced that health service cash limits were to be 'revised'. The cash limit was cut by £131 million, made up of 1 per cent off current expenditure (running costs) and 2 per cent off capital expenditure. This cut was to 'compensate' for a projected overspend in the GPs' drugs bill, which is not 'cash limited' (doctors prescribe as many drugs as they think necessary). *Total* NHS spending thus remains the same, but in fact, in mid-financial year, health authorities are being asked to cut current spending by 1 per cent.

If we add up the effects of inflation, the NHS wages bill and the 'Lawson' cuts, it is already clear that NHS spending – except on the doctors' drugs bill – has *in real terms* (even as defined by the government) been cut this year by about 1 per cent. This is before we have even begun to consider the other pressures on the health service.

Britain has an aging population and a rising birth rate. In 1980 prices, the average health spending per head of population per year is about £160. Births, on average, cost £855, while those aged 75 and over cost the NHS, on average, £765 per year. Official DHSS estimates say that, until 1990, we need to spend 0.7 per cent more each year, in real terms, on the health service – just to account for the changing composition of the population.

In addition, there is the factor of cost drift. New technology, such as total hip replacements, improves the quality of health care for a limited number of people, but creates new demands on the NHS. It is estimated that it must add 0.5 to 0.75 per cent each year to NHS spending.

Instead of cutting spending by 1 per cent, the government needs to increase it in real terms by between 1 and 1.5 per cent per year, *just to maintain the level of services*. But the government's long term commitment to NHS spending, announced in June this year, is to increase real NHS spending by only 0.5 per cent per year for the next ten years.

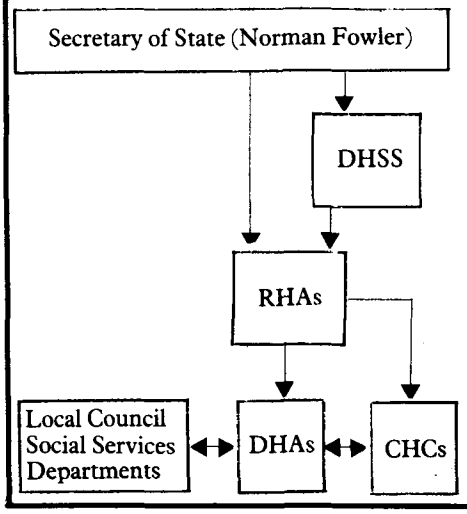
That is bad enough. Predictably, perhaps, the real situation is worse. The reason is that the government's commitment to reduce the NHS's share of national income – for that is what it amounts to – includes a redistribution of resources within the NHS. Under a system devised in 1976 by the Resource Allocation Working Party (RAWP), the Conservative government has perverted the socialist notion of bringing the poorest regions up to the level of the best. We now have a levelling down of the best-provided health authorities to a level below the average – which explains the level of closures and other cutbacks in South East England.

THE FINER POINTS of health service macro-economics are vitally important, but what is the effect of all this on patients at 'ground level'? If we take the example of one district health authority, we can trace how ward closures and redundancies are connected to the decisions taken by ministers. Last month, in the West London Hospital in Hammersmith, a ward was closed. Over last weekend, wards in the Charing Cross Hospital in Fulham were shut as they went over to five-day working. At weekends, patients are being sent home or transferred to other wards. These ward closures have counted as part of a package of cuts agreed by Hammersmith and Fulham district health authority at a meeting on 29 September. Eight measures, resulting in a total saving this year of £580,000, have been approved.

Out of the authority's annual budget of £45 million, which was increased from last year to take account of inflation, this amounts to a 1.3 per cent cut. This cut has two components: 0.8 per cent of it, the authority's chairman freely admits, 'relates to a local problem of past overspending on nursing services'. The other 0.5 per cent is the part of the 'Lawson' 1 per cent cut which the regional health authority, North West Thames, has passed on. North West Thames was able to absorb half the required cut at regional level – but only by deferring capital spending and running down its reserves.

THE BITTEREST pill was yet to come. The day after the Hammersmith and Fulham health authority meeting in September, Mr Fowler announced his staffing cuts, which produced an outcry in the press and gave Neil Kinnock his theme for the Labour Party Conference in Brighton. Unlike the

Health service structure



Health service abbreviations

CHC Community Health Council (1 for each DHA, 50 per cent appointed by local council, 33 per cent by voluntary organisations, 17 per cent by RHA)

DHA District Health Authority (192 in England and Wales, 75 per cent appointed by RHA, 25 per cent by local Council)

RAWP Resource Allocation Working Party, appointed in 1975 to design a way of redistributing NHS resources 'responsive objectively, equitably and efficiently to relative need', it reported in 1976

RHA Regional Health Authority (14 in England, appointed by the Secretary of State)

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

The health service structure is very different in both Scotland and Northern Ireland (in Scotland the service reports to Minister of State for Scotland George Younger and is administered by 15 Health Boards). In Wales there is no RHA; the 9 DHAs are directly responsible to the Secretary of State for Wales and Welsh Office.

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'The reduction in staff this year will now be just under 5,000. This does not in any way lessen this government's commitment to the NHS.'

Norman Fowler, 30.9.83

'Lawson' cut in July, which was 1 per cent applied equally over the country, the staffing cuts are 'RAWP-related' and thus range from a 1.7 per cent cut in North West Thames to a 1.2 per cent *increase* in East Anglia.

This means 1,000 jobs must go in North West Thames. Hammersmith and Fulham's share of this total, after counting staff needed for new developments this year, is 150. The measures already agreed account for 80 jobs. This leaves them with a further 70 job cuts to find, in what Mr Fowler says is not a 'new round of cuts'.

Hammersmith and Fulham health authority meets this week to discuss how the reduction can be achieved. Seven health authorities, including Brent (also in North West Thames), are so far refusing to implement these cuts, but Hammersmith and Fulham have confined themselves to a letter of protest to Kenneth Clarke, the Health Minister.

The unions have been 'appalled' by the letter's conciliatory tone and have pleaded with the authority to defy the government. But, with only three 'notable exceptions' on the authority prepared to fight the cuts, they have little chance of getting their way (the three are all local Council appointees, but the majority – three-quarters – of DHA members are always appointed by RHAs, whose members are in turn appointed by the Secretary of State).

The regional health authorities *have* been fighting central government interference in staffing levels for years, in an increasingly bitter behind-the-scenes dispute. This partly explains the extraordinary timing of the cuts announcement, exactly half way through the current financial year. Because over 70 per cent of NHS spending is on wages and salaries, Conservative ministers have for some time regarded blocking the constant rise in staff numbers as a high priority. Health authorities have jealously guarded their independence; but, by August this year, the government lost patience. It began what were in effect unilateral 'discussions' about a possible crude reduction in staffing, which ended with 'manpower targets' being unilaterally 'settled'.

Apart from making a nonsense of the government's commitment to the NHS, there are all sorts of difficulties and injustices involved in the staffing cuts as imposed by Mr Fowler. The information on which the required cuts are based is wholly inadequate. It consists of raw payroll data stored on the DHSS's computer, which often double-counts people who change jobs during the year. It takes no account of the fact that many authorities were temporarily understaffed at the 'baseline' date (March 1983) because they were saving money for new developments which will need to be staffed in future.

Although the government's line is that NHS payroll information is better than nothing and that it has to force the health authorities, somehow, to start being 'efficient' about staffing, it is also suspiciously convenient for Mr Fowler's privatisation drive. One way in which health authorities could meet the staffing targets by March next year is to contract out hospital services such as cleaning and catering. This would transfer staff from the DHSS payroll figure to the private sector. Although it would not necessarily save the NHS money, it would be an easy way of reaching the target, without reducing patient services.

NORMAN FOWLER'S only escape route, if he wishes to carry on saying that the health service is safe with him, is to continue to make ritual references to 'efficiency savings' (of which privatisation is ideologically a part). When pressed last Sunday on LWT's *Weekend World,* he refused to be drawn on the suggestion that the working practices of hospital doctors might provide the only real scope for efficiency savings, although the introduction of five-day wards in the Charing Cross Hospital might suggest that the way doctors work is inefficient and wasteful.

It is certainly becoming increasingly clear that the scope for savings elsewhere in the NHS is very limited. The 'index of change in health service activity' (produced by the DHSS from figures such as cases treated and outpatient attendances) rose faster than both staffing and spending levels in the five years to 1981.

The British NHS also spends a relatively small proportion of its income (about 5 or 6 per cent) on administration. This is comparable to Sweden; about half as much as France; and a quarter of the US figure.

If there is any fat to cut in the NHS, it surrounds the branded drugs bill (estimated to provide the drug companies with profits of over £300 million this year) and the senior consultants' working practices. Mr Fowler got £25 million out of the pharmaceutical firms this year, but lacks the political will to get rid of branded drugs altogether, or to take on the British Medical Association. □

On the evening of November 4, 1605, Parliament wasn't quite as safe as houses. One Mr Fawkes was quietly ferrying 36 barrels of gunpowder across the Thames at dead of night. By morning, King James I *et al* would have been dead too. Fortunately, the plot fizzled out before Fawkes had time to light up. His fate was a cold cell and an early grave. You can't be too careful when it comes to potentially explosive situations. As a major oil company, Mobil spends many thousands of pounds – and man-hours – on safety procedures. We know that to be safe *and* sure requires time, care and patience. If you are celebrating November 5 with fireworks, do follow all the safety instructions and make doubly sure that children are supervised at all times. That way only the guy will get burnt. Happy Guy Fawkes day.

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Science in society

Channel 4 is entering its second year. David Berry looks at the case of one programme series, *Crucible*, and argues that under pressure from all sides the original idea of C4 balancing other channels is being abandoned

NEXT WEEK Channel 4 will celebrate its first anniversary. In its Charlotte Street offices in West London, there will be some relief that the channel has survived at all. But that survival has been at a price. As many senior TV executives privately admit, many of the original hopes of C4 have been abandoned.

This Friday, the last of *The Friday Alternative* programmes is being shown. It examines criticisms of political censorship by C4 that have emerged in the last few months. C4 has refused to show Ken Loach's films on trade unions. It has 'postponed' 'The Nuclear State' – a programme in the science series, *Crucible*. And it has not renewed the contract for *The Friday Alternative* itself.

This is the story of *Crucible*. In Friday's programme, Jeremy Isaacs, head of C4, denies that this series was ever conceived as a radical and left-wing critique of the social relations of science. This is not true. And he is not the only TV executive connected with *Crucible* who is now busy rewriting history. The story of *Crucible* is, in some ways, a symbol of what has happened at C4.

In 1980, ATV had just finished *The Mighty Micro* – a prime-time series about microelectronics. The producer, Lawrence Moore, suggested a wider series of science programmes to follow it. Moore's mildly heterodox approach was soon replaced at ATV by the radical Marxism of Dr Robert Young – well-known for his political views, a one-time fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and a prolific writer on the politics of science and technology. A year later, with the awarding of the new ITV 1 franchises, ATV had become Central and the series, now labelled *Crucible – Science in Society*, with Young in editorial charge, was to be the new C4 'Flagship of Science Series'.

The overall aim of *Crucible*, outlined in the original proposals by Young and others, and fully accepted by Central and C4, was to develop a critique of the role of expertise in a democratic society. It was intended not only to challenge established views about science but to raise questions relating to military and industrial power. The series aimed to voice an academically well established vein of criticism calling for a new framework for the social relations of science.

Robert Young: his radical critique of science has proved too much for C4

The first programme, on the technological aspects of pregnancy, was shown in November 1982 and received good reviews. An acclaimed programme about Sir Isaac Newton followed. Both Liz Forgan, *Crucible*'s C4 Commissioning Editor, and Paul Bonner, C4 Controller (himself once a science programmes producer), were delighted.

But 'Newton' was the first part of a trilogy of programmes that would vigorously contradict conventional wisdom on the role of the scientist, on ideas of nature and on ideas of human nature. Trouble began when the second part, the Nature programme, was screened in January this year. Bonner complained that it was 'unsubstantiated opinion' and said that there was going to be trouble. Indeed, there were attacks in both the *TES*, and *New Scientist*. Richard Creasy, the executive in charge of Central TV's programmes for C4, got Young to prepare a defensive dossier showing the scholarship behind the Nature programme.

AT A TIME of increasing attacks on C4 by the Right, Forgan and Bonner became worried that another *Crucible* programme, 'FunFare' (a gentle look at the amusement industry), was going to be a strident left polemic. They insisted, for the first time, on their right to view an early 'rough-cut' of the programme. When the director, Moore, and the consultant, Young, insisted on being present, Bonner refused to come. Forgan was furious at their presence and asked for a number of changes. Such viewings and heavier 'requests' for changes from C4 became the new norm. The fragility of C4's much vaunted publishing philosophy began to be apparent. Initially, Forgan's role had been to check that programmes met IBA regulations and to give advice. Due to political pressures, she was becoming an executive producer. Conventional TV norms were being reasserted.

Creasy reneged on his agreement to allow Young control of the programmes, giving it instead to directors, regardless of how much they knew about the subject-matter. This contradicted the collective (and radical) aims of the *Crucible* unit. It also set aside Young's contract.

A subsequent *Crucible* programme, shown in March 1983 and originally designed to explore ways of involving the public in scientific decision-making, was reduced to a roomful of people talking about the Sizewell Enquiry. Even this format was debated 'at the highest levels of C4'. *Crucible* had 'strayed into current affairs'.

Current Affairs is TV shorthand for politics – yet a political role had been clearly defined in the series' original proposals. Isaacs now denies this is so. Another programme, on Medicine and Imperialism, was so diluted that the wider analysis simply disappeared.

By spring this year, Central was actively pre-censoring – 'Liz Forgan won't like this, let's change it.' And Central's own producer, Jane Cousins, in making cuts in a programme, described herself as 'Liz Forgan's representative'.

Creasy's relations with C4 were becoming generally problematic. He has an unmatched track-record of UK documentary production and was in danger of being seen as Forgan's 'messenger boy'. Forgan after all, is new to TV. In June, Creasy delivered to C4 'The Nuclear State', a *Crucible* programme on the gap between what people know and what people feel about nuclear weapons, which he felt happy to transmit. The subsequent row about this film showed that neither C4, nor Central cared any longer about the original aims of *Crucible*.

Last June, during election week, Central told Dennis Postle, the film's director: 'We've shown it to C4. They say it epitomises the kind of trendy left-wing material for which they are being heavily criticised

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C. F. J. Punt, LL.B., Chairman
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and it will be very difficult to show at present. But they say it's perfectly transmittable and will show it some time in the future.'

IT IS FROM this point that those involved start re-writing history. Paul Bonner: 'I talked to Moore and Young at various of the early stages and wrote in great detail and with great sadness when we decided not to go ahead with the contract.' Moore and Young say that they have never received such a letter and have never met Bonner in order to talk about *Crucible*. This small incident is, perhaps, indicative of relations between C4 and *Crucible*.

Last week, Creasy told the *New Statesman* that he *may* have said, three years ago, that Young and other consultants were to control editorial content, but he found out that they 'didn't understand the realities of TV'. This is odd, since Young's October 1981 contract specifies that 'you should have control over the content, general direction and approach of the series programmes provided that ATV should retain final editorial control exercised by Richard Creasy'. And his October 1982 contract gives him not only joint control with producers and directors, but chief responsibility for the conception and development of all new film projects in *Crucible*.

Isaacs and others are now saying that *Crucible* was never intended to be a radical series, that the £170,000 spent on research and development of a *Crucible* Critique of Science could be written off when the series became inconvenient. Once *Crucible* was no longer seen as a series, Creasy, Bonner and Forgan could remove 'The Nuclear State' from under the *Crucible* logo, where it was part of a general critique of science, and let it wait its turn as a one-off documentary which, presumably, will be suitably 'balanced' by some other programme. Several months later, it still hasn't been scheduled for showing.

Similarly, it became easy first to cut the series short, then to axe it; to deny that there ever was a two-year plus commitment, even though it was assumed in the related *Crucible* books contract with Pan Books, expounded in Central's own publicity for programmes in Spring 1983 and proven by the enormous £1,250,000 that Central spent on *Crucible*. This commitment of two years *at least* was promised to job interviewees and formed the basis behind the purchase and refurbishing of 1250 sq. ft. of North London Offices. It was frequently mentioned by Central to *Crucible* as an agreed commitment from C4. All this is now being denied by all the executives concerned.

The *Crucible* experience shows that C4 agrees with BBC and ITV that science is not political. Bonner and Isaacs both told the *New Statesman* that the *Crucible* programmes weren't science but 'polemic' – i.e. political – as though these were mutually exclusive states. *Horizon* and *Tomorrow's World*, because they represent consensus politics rather than a radical critique, escape this kind of criticism.

Crucible got some splendid reviews and reasonable audiences. The film makers and consultants were highly regarded. Postle, for example, has been making networked science documentaries for 20 years. Many people connected with *Crucible* were established authorities in their professions. Forgan and Bonner, if not Isaacs, admit that some of the programmes were excellent. Why, then, was the series cut? Why was 'The Nuclear State' not a *Crucible* programme? Why was the sentence 'Technology, after all, is politics' deleted from the innocuous *Crucible* programme on Solar Energy that was shown last month?

JOHN RANELAGH has taken over Forgan's 'science brief' at C4. He has found programmes on 'Wealth Creation' and 'The vital importance of Engineering' – neither of which sounds in much need of political interference. As Young says: 'I've experienced "the consensus moving" several times in the past 15 years. I did a lot of broadcasts for the BBC once. Then the invitations stopped abruptly. A few years later, Lord Annan, who had been Provost of my college, remarked that one reason a genuinely Open Broadcasting Authority was needed is that, since the early '70s, the broad consensus has broken up and significant voices have had no access. What we got instead was Channel 4 *inside* the IBA.' C4 is soon to screen *The Ploughman's Lunch*, that paradigm of media careerists' political pliability. The irony does not escape Young.

As C4 moves into its second year, it is possible to draw several conclusions from the experience of *Crucible*, Loach, *The Friday Alternative* and others. C4 made its first commissions under the banner of a 'publishing philosophy' – it would not itself make programmes, but would use commissioning editors to help independents express their own views. This is now being re-interpreted so that 'editorial responsibility' and greater and increasing interventions are normal practice. Ranelagh, Isaac's special assistant and widely regarded as 'Margaret Thatcher's man in C4', says that he never believed in the original intention anyway. Others say that it was never on because 'nobody had changed the Act'. C4 operates under the same law as ITV – a fact that Lord Thomson, Chairman of the IBA, recently pointed out forcibly in a letter to ITV companies.

Hence, the need for 'balance' is more and more frequently expressed. Original expectations were that C4 would balance the other channels – now, for contentious programmes, C4 is operating in the same way as other channels, often demanding 'balance' inside a single programme. This contradicts C4's original mandate of principled pluralism.

It was obvious that, when the doors opened to new voices, many of them would be cross, yet Bonner now speaks of winnowing out 'shrillness' in search of 'quality'. Isaacs, however, can still claim, in July's *Marxism Today*, that he wants to give 'some preponderance to the voice and weight of opinion of critics in a society in order that the power of those who control the leaders of power in society may be held in check'.

The consensus of British TV, as several executives have privately confirmed, is now 'narrower than before C4 started'. Even Isaacs says that, although it's still possible to get a single programme through, the pressures mount fast for a series.

Careful comparison of interviews with Isaacs, Bonner, Forgan, Creasy and others gives cause for great concern with the way in which people at the heart of C4 speak, think and operate. They smoothly and articulately declare that what is presently happening isn't. They contradict themselves and each other. This is, of course, alarming only to liberals and the Left. To the people whose pressures on C4 in the last nine months have been so successful, it must be heartening. □

SCENES FROM THE LIVES OF THE GREAT SOCIALISTS: No. 19 of the Series
LENIN & KRUPSKAYA PREPARE TO BOARD THE SEALED TRAIN.
HEY, VLADIMIR ILYICH, WHO'S THAT PRAT OVER THERE?
MUST BE THE VANGUARD OF THE REVOLUTION
Martin Rowson

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POLICE

Absolutely standard

Duncan Campbell details disturbing evidence of surveillance tactics

'ROUTINE' POLITICAL surveillance of peace campaigners and researchers has been uncovered by the BBC *Watchdog* unit, part of BBC1's new *Sixty Minutes* programme. CND and other campaigning organisations do receive many allegations of police surveillance, telephone tapping and similar activities, but these complaints can almost never be substantiated. Now five well-documented cases give a clear insight into police and security methods.

The most embarrassing for the police is the case of Madeline Haigh, a leading member of Sutton Coldfield Peace Group. It has already become public and West Midlands Chief Constable Sir Philip Knights has been summoned to a special meeting of his Police Committee on 16 November, to explain how police two years ago hoaxed Ms Haigh about a non-existent mail order fraud in order to make enquiries about members of the peace group – and to explain why police officers then arranged an 18 month long cover-up of the episode. The Chief Constable will also be asked to explain how he came to mislead the woman's MP – who happens to be Norman Fowler, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Services.

Madeline Haigh was one of of four women from the group who had written to the local paper, the *Sutton News*, in 1981 about peace issues. Soon after, each woman had a (hoax) phone call whose purpose was evidently to confirm their identity and obtain christian names and family details. The Haighs were rung up by someone asking if they were the Haighs with a vintage car for sale. A Quaker friend, Linda Pegler, was rung up and asked if her family were the only Peglers in Sutton Coldfield. Two other colleagues had identical hoax calls, referring to riding schools and the water authority.

A few weeks later, two officers from 'Birmingham CID' called to question Haigh about an alleged £20 fraud committed in her name aganst Grattans, the mail order company. She was asked if she was normally in during the day and gave them personal details. Contacting Grattans the next day, she learned that the complaint was false. The local police denied being involved. Dissatisfied with the results of their subsequent enquiry, she wrote to her MP, Norman Fowler, who wrote in turn to Chief Constable Sir Philip Knights.

In November 1982, West Midlands police reopened the inquiry. Then a new hoaxer, posing as a member of Sutton Coldfield Peace Group, wrote to Labour MPs Frank Allaun and Martin Flannery, inviting them at short notice to speak at a meeting. Members of the group again complained to the police and another police officer investigated this complaint. He said that the police knew who the hoaxer was, but asked her an unusual series of questions: Did she write letters to the *Sutton News*? Had she or anyone else in the peace group who had written letters had any funny phone calls? If she or her friends recalled any suspicious phone calls, would she let the police know? At this time, Linda Pegler did not recollect the series of 'funny' calls that had indeed been made.

Soon after this visit, in December 1982, the West Midlands police told Fowler:

> Your constituent can be assured that she has not been the subject of enquiry by this Force.

Fowler was also told that Ms Haigh was now satisfied that the men had only purported to come from the police. She was not, and complained again. Fowler then got a second letter from Knights admitting that the two men 'were in fact police officers'. Last month, he admitted a cover-up to the Police Committee; the two men had come from the Special Branch. The Sutton Coldfield Peace Group now suspects that the fake letters to Frank Allaun and Martin Flannery were intended by the police to trigger a complaint, so that the Special Branch could establish whether the group realised that the police had also made the hoax phone calls as well as the bogus visits. Apologising to the Haighs about the deception, the head of the police complaints branch told them that it was:

> Absolutely standard (that) people who submit letters to newspapers are visited and checked out . . .

A complaint is now being taken to the European Commission of Human Rights. The deputy chair of the Police Committee, Terry Savage, said this week that, with 'reports of similar incidents' coming in, 'the most important question is to whom the Special Branch are accountable'.

MADELINE HAIGH's case is echoed in the experience of Reading researcher Guy Smith – now a radio reporter for the BBC. Between leaving school in 1978 and starting to work for the BBC, Smith carried out a research project on civil defence. In the course of his research he wrote to several government offices – and the Thames Valley Police – asking for information on civil defence plans. Some of his requests, but not the letter written to the police headquarters, were passed to the Special Branch. A week later, a plainclothes police officer called saying that he was the chief suspect in a bank robbery which had recently taken place in Broad Street, Reading. His motorcycle had been seen by an eye witness to the robbery. Mr Smith was then questioned for half an hour – not about his whereabouts at the time of the robbery, but about how he paid for his flat and other personal matters.

In fact Smith had only just acquired the bike, which – at 125cc – was an unlikely getaway vehicle. After he complained about this approach, Thames Valley's Assistant Chief Constable wrote apologising for the cock-and-bull story, which he said had been invented by Detective Constable Mooney of the Force's Special Branch. The story, Smith was told, was 'fictitious', the approach 'misguided', and the officer concerned was 'no longer employed in Special Branch duties'.

BURY ST EDMUND's teacher Peter Cox had an alarming experience after taking his pupils on an official coach trip to the US base at Lakenheath, during which they stopped to look at the nearby RAF base at Honington. During the visit, the school coach was twice approached by military police, who suggested to Cox that his car was stolen or illegally licensed. He had visited the base in the car a few days earlier, to find a suitable spot from which the children could watch the aircraft. They told him that his car 'has been sighted around various airbases' (which was untrue) and asked him to ring RAF Honington to 'clarify' his car registration, which he did not do. Four days later, two still-unidentified security officials, who said they were 'not military police, not civil police, but somewhere in-between' visited the school and asked for Cox to be brought out of lessons.

The two plainclothes officials refused to give their names, or tell the teacher or headmaster who they were. They said that their *bona fides* could be confirmed by a phone call to the Suffolk Constabulary HQ near Ipswich. They questioned Cox for two hours and then inspected his car. He says that they repeatedly insinuated that it was improper for a teacher to discuss nuclear weapons issues with children and that he should not be involved in CND. The headmaster says he was very angry about the visit. The officials said that:

> We have to investigate any interest in any of the military bases and we have to check out any people [involved].

'What do you do then?', they were asked. Cox clearly recalls their reply which frightened him: 'We have to eliminate them'.

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As they inspected Cox's car, they pointed out their own vehicle, a distinctive metallic blue Jaguar. Later the same evening, the Jaguar followed Cox's girlfriend as she drove around Bury visiting friends. Suffolk Constabulary said this week that the men weren't police officers. RAF Honington told the BBC that they hadn't kept any records of such enquiries. If the officials were not Special Branch, they were probably employed by the Royal Air Force's own Provost and Security Service.

LOIS CAMERON, a CND member in Liverpool was quizzed by Merseyside Police Special Branch after she had written to the nearby US Army base at Burtonwood, near Warrington, to ask what happened there and whether they stored nuclear weapons. Soon afterwards, two military police called to see her. She was out at the time, so their visit was followed up by Detective Sergeant Parslow of the Merseyside Special Branch, who arranged an interview. Local solicitor John Linden, who attended the interview to the evident discomfort of the police, confirms that she was told that the enquiry was a 'routine investigation . . . when people had written to an air force base like Burtonwood'. She was asked to provide personal details and then quizzed on her politics: Did she have friends involved in a foreign government? Did she know the Russian ambassador (sic)? Was she a member of a political party, in particular the Communist Party or the Socialist Workers' Party? Did she belong to a 'cause' organisation? Which?

She said that she was a member of CND and asked the police why they were making these enquiries. Questioned this week about the case, Detective Sergeant Parslow said that he was too 'embarrassed' to comment. A colleague in his office confirmed that he worked for the Special Branch. □

Research with Ivor Gaber and Elizabeth Clough of Watchdog.

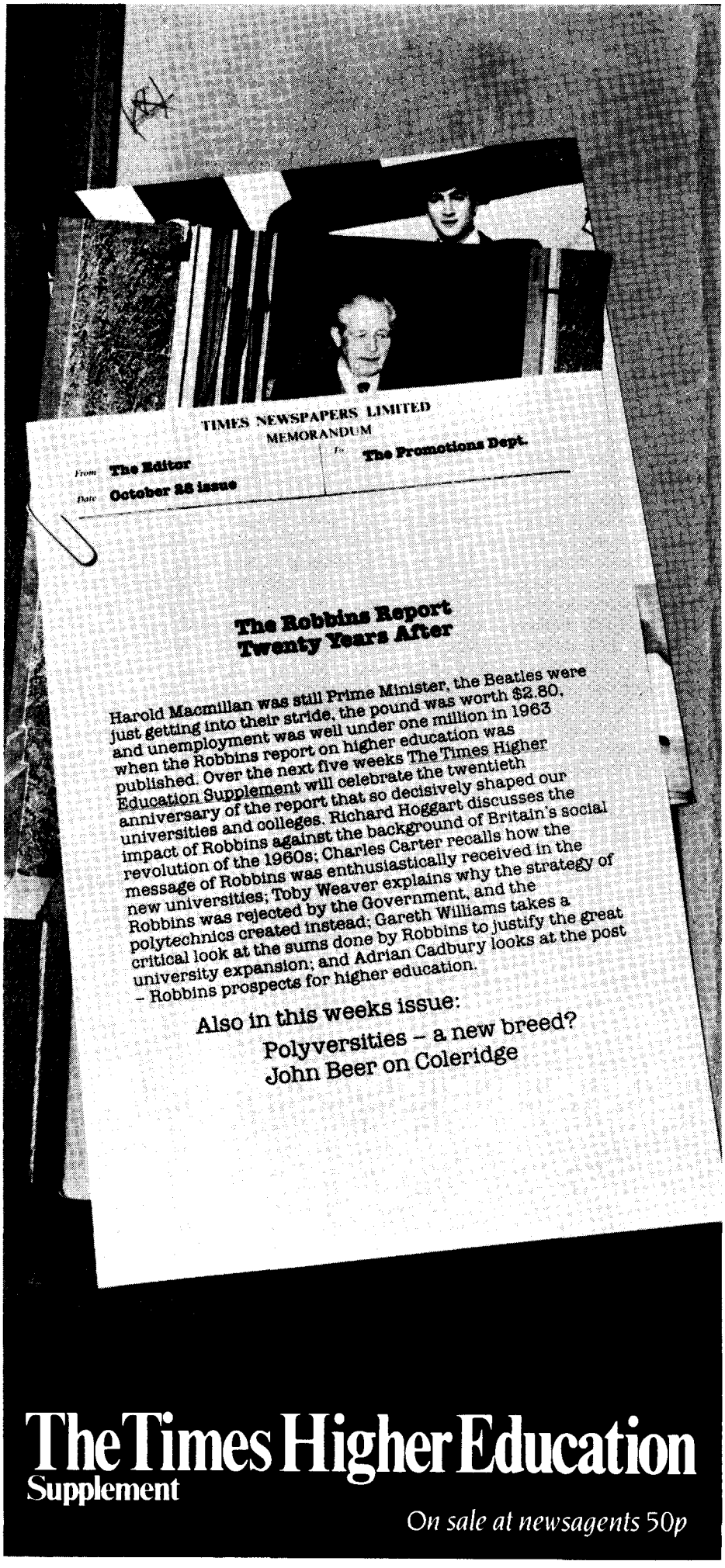
THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

□ The tea towel collection that won cranky Tony Judkins a place in the Guinness Book of Records left his live-in girl friend limp with boredom. Now she has walked out. And broken-hearted Tony is all alone with his 6,000 tea towels – and the washing up. 'It's all my fault,' said 46-year-old Tony. 'I let tea towels take over my life.' – *Sunday People* (G. Moor).

□ Three teenagers broke into an Alnwick garage and stole goods and equipment worth almost £1,000, a court heard. But the 'amateurish' raid was foiled when the haul, which included tools, electrical gear and car radios, was discovered by a policeman hidden in a pile of grass clippings near the garage. – *Northumberland Gazette* (Elaine Housby).

□ City councillors are considering supporting a plea for an early appeal into the jailing of Dennis Kelly – to reduce the amount of graffiti on walls in Liverpool calling for his release. – *Liverpool Echo* (Moira Redmond).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MEMORANDUM
From The Editor
To The Promotions Dept.
Date October 28 issue
The Robbins Report
Twenty Years After
Harold Macmillan was still Prime Minister, the Beatles were just getting into their stride, the pound was worth $2.80, and unemployment was well under one million in 1963 when the Robbins report on higher education was published. Over the next five weeks The Times Higher Education Supplement will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the report that so decisively shaped our universities and colleges. Richard Hoggart discusses the impact of Robbins against the background of Britain's social revolution of the 1960s; Charles Carter recalls how the message of Robbins was enthusiastically received in the new universities; Toby Weaver explains why the strategy of Robbins was rejected by the Government, and the polytechnics created instead; Gareth Williams takes a critical look at the sums done by Robbins to justify the great university expansion; and Adrian Cadbury looks at the post – Robbins prospects for higher education.
Also in this weeks issue:
Polyversities – a new breed?
John Beer on Coleridge
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TRADE UNIONS

Good connections

BT engineers are still successfully pursuing their campaign against privatisation. Walter Pond describes how

ON SATURDAY, 8 October, a number of people with something in common found their home phones had a similar fault. The people were Phil Holt, executive member of the Post Office Engineering Union, David Norman, the union's general treasurer, Bryan Harper, the union's National Organiser, and Colin Walsh, secretary of the London International Services branch of the union. They had good reason to get in touch with each other that day, but when they tried to, each caller heard the ringing tone, but none of their phones actually rang.

This coincidence is particularly remarkable since only hours before on Friday night/Saturday morning, BT management had marched into London International telephone exchanges and thrown out POEU shift workers who had been working to rule as part of the union's campaign against privatisation. Members of the Society of Telecom Executives were roused from their beds to replace the POEU. Over the previous week the engineers work to rule (involving 'busying out' slightly defective circuits) had been so effective that Britain was beginning to lose contact with large tracts of the Third World.

Now, as a result of senior POEU officers' phones suddenly and simultaneously failing, the POEU was unable to organise any serious response to the BT management takeover. Since that weekend over 1,500 POEU members in the international exchanges have been locked out. Few know what quality of international phone service is being provided by STE members, but Colin Walsh is convinced that BT cannot keep the exchanges running effectively for more than a couple of months. Similarly, the union believes its strikes at seven selected inland exchanges in London will have a cumulative impact. One of the most unusual and important trials of strength between the union movement and the government has thus turned into a long war of attrition.

This is not what BT wanted at all. Once it became clear at the union's special conference at Wembley on 18 September that the union would fight privatisation, BT management sought to spread the strike and the union sought to circumscribe it. BT rightly saw that the more POEU members it suspended, the more costly the action would become for the union since it has promised to pay the equivalent of take home pay to each member suspended (broadly £110 a week). If over 4,000 POEU members were suspended the union would go bust.

By the Monday after the takeover of international exchanges, over 3,000 POEU members were suspended, on the streets and entitled to POEU dole money, all for refusing to sign a pledge of normal working. Internal BT management documents had shown the plan was to have 8,000 POEU members suspended by the end of the week. This was known as Operation Black Hole. Unfortunately for BT, the union knew about the Black Hole and responded by simply telling the members it did not want out on strike to sign the pledge. Collapse of BT plan Mark 1.

Next, BT began an elaborate bussing policy whereby engineers were bussed from Hastings to Canterbury, others were then bussed from Canterbury to Croydon and still more were bussed from Croydon to one of the central London exchanges where POEU members were out on strike. Similar 'coach chains' leading to the capital were constructed throughout the Home Counties, stretching as far afield as Leicester.

BT presumably thought that the POEU would mount pickets at each point in the chain and that POEU members would refuse to cross, leading to more suspensions and more financial outlay for the union. However, the POEU has instructed its members to agree to the magic mystery coach trip, and to work as directed, except where POEU members are striking and picketting in central London. Mass suspensions have again been avoided and few have crossed the London picket lines, according to the union. Collapse of BT plan Mark 2.

The next ruse has been to threaten to sack BT members who had refused to agree, by a certain deadline, to cross union picket lines. So far 19 members have been selected for this treatment, apparently at random. The union instructed the 19 to ignore the threat and when the first deadlines ran out this Monday, BT backed down and magnanimously said that, 'as a gesture of goodwill', BT would give the union until the recalled POEU conference starting on 7 November to reconsider the union's policy.

AT THE previous special conference at Wembley, the Left-led executive won endorsement for its policy of selective industrial action by 80,824 votes to 48,713. Many observers had thought the next special conference in November would be the moment the union rank and file would tell the executive to sue for peace and to seek the best conditions possible under a privatised BT. The Union Right would argue powerfully at the Conference that the action was ineffective and liable to provoke Norman Tebbit into breaking up BT altogether, something the BT Board had managed to dissuade Patrick Jenkin from doing. Even the so-called hard Left on the executive were concerned that membership resolve would crumble, especially if Mercury Communications, the private telecommunications network, successfully won an injunction preventing the union from continuing to black Mercury.

However, the union's unexpected court victory last week – courtesy of the People's Judge Mr Justice Mervyn Davies – has undercut one of the union Right's major arguments, namely that industrial action to stop privatisation is unlawful and anti-parliamentary. But Mr Justice Davies ruled the action did not constitute a politically motivated defence of public service against private profit. It was a good old economistic trade dispute over jobs.

John Barnell

POEU making good its promises on strike pay

Of course, Mr Justice Mervyn Davies's ruling at an interlocutory hearing does not mean that the union can now undertake any action that might stop privatisation. He has merely ruled that, at a full trial, the union is likely to be able to mount an adequate defence that it was refusing to connect Mercury to the public network out of a genuine fear of job losses. At its most limited, the ruling suggests that a union that organises only in the public sector need not co-operate with a management instruction to provide a service to a private sector competitor. It is not clear that the ruling would be of relevance if a separate court case were brought against the union over its industrial action against the BT sell-off, since in this action there has been no specific management instruction with which the union can be in dispute.

But, whatever the uncertainties and implications of the judgement, the union campaign has not been halted by a judge. It will now go onto an expensive and well marshalled propaganda offensive, arguing that a sell-off will lead to higher domestic telephone charges, no improvement in efficiency, a collapse in rural service and unscrupulous private telephone companies trampling over the property of rural landowners as they set about erecting unsightly equipment.

The purpose is to dislodge some of the Tory parliamentary majority and to raise the hackles of Tory members of the House of Lords. It may seem a little sanguine, but the unions are wise enough to know that a little industrial action concentrates the mind. □

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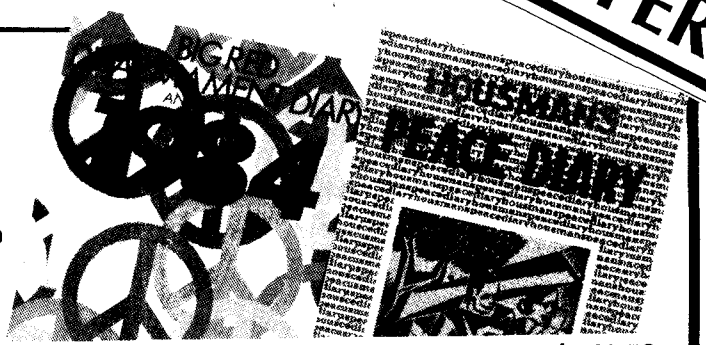

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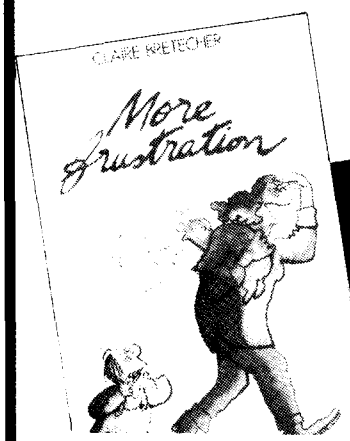

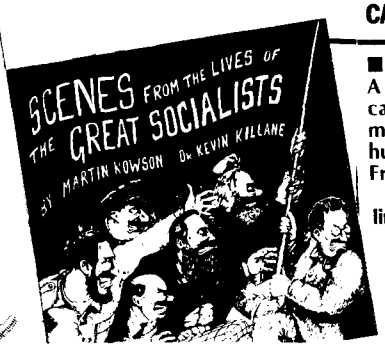

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DIARY

Ian McEwan

Attacks on the NHS are a terrible thing, of course, but I would be more indignant if I felt a little more sympathy for the medical profession itself. The doctors have something of a crisis of faith on their hands. The punters are beginning to vote with their feet. Holistic methods, homeopathy and a variety of alternative therapies are enjoying a boom. A few doctors have been appearing on TV lately to concede, in their best bedside manner, that their purely mechanistic treatments, their commitment to high technology and above all their condescension towards patients might be putting people off. The profession has fought hard to ensure that a number of proven therapies and procedures are not available through the NHS. The irony is that most of these treatments are relatively inexpensive. If, like me and my wife, you wanted to have your baby at home, simply, without drugs or machines, or without the mother being treated as though she were sick or stupid, and you wanted these strange things without fighting everyone in sight, then your best bet would be to hire an independent midwife.

It might not be easy. In the rush to centralise and technologise birth, the NHS bureaucracy, urged on by the doctors, has discouraged and all but eliminated home births and has tried to wipe out the honourable profession of midwifery. A handful of hospitals in London and elsewhere are now offering not to torture your baby with bright lights or drop-kick it across the delivery room the moment it is born, but mostly the vogue is still for trauma and humiliation – the instantly cut cord for baby, the pubic shave for mother. The point is that pregnancy is not an illness. Most births are straightforward. The few that do go wrong tend to do so slowly and in fairly predictable ways – that's when you need to transfer from home to hospital to use those machines. The NHS could save itself millions and improve its service if it ceased to frighten people into doctor-centred, hospitalised births, and if it restored to midwives the autonomy and status they've been demanding. Our problem is our mad need to ape the Americans. Just as we shall be importing at the end of this year their way of death, so our health service over the past 20 years has been importing their ghastly way of birth. I suppose we shall have to wait for the American public to rise up against their own obstetric practices before we have the courage to do it ourselves here.

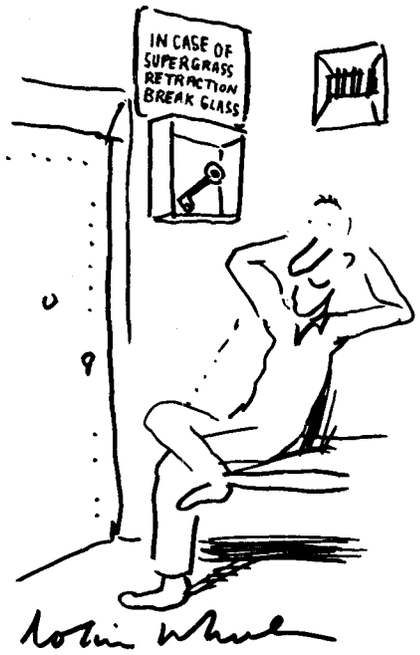
Anyway, for what it's worth, the birth of our son was, without question, all the happier and more intimate an occasion for not taking place in a hospital. It was a family rather than a surgical event. Within seconds of being born, the baby was gazing quietly round a softly lit bedroom. There were a few close friends, a fire burning in the grate, a bottle of champagne and a Schubert quintet on the record player. His sisters – the baby's that is – brought him up a candle-lit birthday cake and there was some spirited discussion as to whether this was his 'noughth' or 'first' birthday. Our midwife, Melody, who struggles to make ends meet and is currently looking for a room or a flat, was perfect – skilful, reassuring, softly spoken. She is, of course, an American.

○

To mark what the *Sunday Times* called the 'sunset' of the peace movement, there took place last Saturday the largest demonstration ever seen in London. I marched with BAND – Book Action for Nuclear Disarmament – and I am sorry to report that the writers put up a very poor show, totally outnumbered by publishers, who appear to have consciences after all. A few weeks ago, in a BAND event which some newspapers inaccurately described as the launch of Salman Rushdie's novel, *Shame*, 72 writers braved the TV and press cameras to read from their own work on the steps of St Martin-in-the-Fields. Of that 72, there were fewer than half a dozen (no, halve *that*) shuffling along behind BAND's outrageous pink banner. The rest were at their typewriters, I suspect, battling nobly against anonymity.

○

I took the train to Norwich and once past Diss spent the time staring glumly out the window. Only a few years ago, this was a lovely stretch of countryside. The fields are now airport-sized. The occasional ditch marks the site of an uprooted hedgerow or line of trees, the monotony of the skyline is relieved by the occasional tin building. A lot has been written about the subsidised destruction of the English countryside. There have been TV documentaries. There is no shortage of depressing information about lost wetlands, uplands, heaths, footpaths, old forests, plant and animal species, and about the over-subsidised farmers and unwanted food for which these colossal sacrifices are made. But there will be no public outcry because most people can't tell an oak tree from a barbed wire fence and don't give a damn. The countryside is where the parking is easier, but the garages are further apart. The Dutch, Belgians, Germans and Poles have millions of acres of bleak and treeless land and they seem just fine. They are our future.



I would have thought that at least Tories, who have been reminding us since the Falklands War how much they love their country, and who naturally despise subsidies for businesses producing unwanted goods, would be giving their responsible ministers a tough time over this monstrous vandalism. It is surely more serious than bashed-in phone boxes. Are not Conservatives supposed to be more respectful towards our rich inheritance, our traditional forms? In fact the Department of the Environment (such an Orwellian name) manages to please everyone by promising a new motorway. For the Left, it means jobs, for the Right, good contracts, and for the Common Man, aka 'the motorist', it means more road on which to put the Datsun through its paces.

○

Still, one shouldn't end gloomily. There are advantages to living in a nation which, give or take a poet or two, despises its countryside. This summer I went walking, at the peak of the holiday season, in two very popular tourist areas – the Lake District and Devon. In each I found that as soon as I was more than a mile or so from the nearest road, the landscape was wonderfully empty of people. On a sunny Bank Holiday afternoon, along a beautiful 14-mile stretch of the North Devon Coast Path, I met only one other walker. He was pacing round a small clearing listening intently to his metal detector. No doubt he had lost his car.

ROGER WODDIS

Criminals and thugs

'We must not allow international criminals and thugs such as these to undermine the peace in Lebanon.' – President Reagan.

Hands up, all those opposed to terror –
All of you? Good, that sets the record
Straight, confirms our moral tone.
There are no words and so on
That can convey our horror at this time.
We are witnesses to a monstrous crime;
Our outraged feelings show on
Our faces, hardening the bone.
(The way to appear suitably haggard
Is to practise it before the mirror).

When evil goes on a bloody bender,
It is the innocents who pay;
But we shall not falter or flinch
Or do any of those things
That make us look invitingly unnerved.
Those brave young boys who so sublimely served
The cause of peace, etcetera,
And did not give an inch
Will be remembered, come the blessed day,
When all the bums are charred to a cinder.

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Blowing the gaff

Claudia Wright explains how Sunday's bomb blast in Beirut has torn the veil of decency from US Middle East strategy

Washington

THE BOMB BLAST that destroyed the US Marine Corps barracks in Beirut on 23 October blew the cover off the Reagan Administration's war policy in Lebanon. It may bring down the fragile coalition that had been built in Congress to support it.

The result is the same as the momentous choice that faced President Johnson on 7 February 1965, when Vietnamese guerrillas dynamited US military quarters at Pleiku. Though the casualties then were far less numerous than in the Beirut blast – eight Americans killed compared to more than 215 – that was the moment that led inexorably to full-scale ground war in the South. 'I've had enough of this,' Johnson is said to have remarked; while, from Saigon, McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Advisor, cabled him to reject an American withdrawal.

Bundy advised – and Johnson decided on – massive air attacks. For advisors like Bundy, who had been planning on military escalation and needed an opportunity to goad Johnson into action, the Pleiku attack 'produced a practicable point of departure'.

For Reagan and his advisors, the Beirut incident is the same point of departure. More soldiers have now been killed in the three years of the Reagan Administration than at any time since the Vietnam war. As he heads into his re-election campaign, Reagan is pulled between his impulse, which is to strike back, and his political instinct, which acknowledges that an expanded war could end his presidency.

In the week before the bomb blast, the President and his advisors thought that they had devised a tactic to give them room for retaliation and to expand the Marines' role without increasing US casualties and without appearing to widen the war. On Tuesday 18 October, during a National Security Council (NSC) meeting, the President approved the idea of allowing the Marines to make heavily armed 'forays' beyond their lines around Beirut airport.

The White House did not want the NSC decision to leak out – to give the impression that the President was expanding the Marines' mission. With this in mind, several questions were planted with reporters at the President's press conference on 20 October. Jeremiah O'Leary, a former Marine and past member of the Reagan NSC staff, got up to say that, when he was a Marine, 'the doctrine was to take the high ground and hold it and not deploy on a flat open field like the Beirut airport'. Then came the primed question: 'What reason is there to prevent the Marines from taking some more defensible positions in pursuit of the policy for which you sent them there?'

This was the public opportunity that Reagan wanted to show that there was nothing he was contemplating that might risk Marine casualties in a wider war. His answer was uncharacteristically subtle. He could have said that the 'high ground' was occupied by Lebanese whose right to be there the US didn't intend to challenge – the ridge line and foothills of the Shouf mountains held by the Druze, and the squatter quarters of Hay es-Sollum controlled by the Shiites. Reagan didn't rule out the Marines making a move into these areas but seemed to suggest that they would not.

'Jerry, all of those things we're asking ourselves and we're looking at everything that can be done to try and make their position safer. But you must remember you were talking about being trained as Marines for combat. If these Marines had gone in there to join in the combat . . . then all of those rules could apply. But they are there . . . to try and maintain a stability, and their sector happens to be trying to maintain that airport and open it up to traffic. So airports just happen to be flat.'

'Does that mean that they cannot sally forth from the borders of the area to which they are assigned if they are attacked from a nearby position?' The President was asked to confirm what he had authorised two days before.

Reagan responded: 'I can't answer that question now, but I virtually tell our people to be in consultation with the men on the ground, the commanders there of those units, for anything in keeping with our mission that we can do to help ensure their safety.' This sounded like a negative. In fact, it was the signal for which the Marines had been waiting; it was the escalation on which the three ex-Marine advisors to the President, Robert McFarlane, George Shultz and James Baker, the White House Chief of Staff, had all agreed. Henceforth, the Marines could retaliate against sniper attacks or shelling by 'forays' after their attackers. If they were successful, and came back to their bunkers unscathed, the President would claim the credit. If they took casualties, the local commander would be blamed for initiating the action on his own.

THE BLOOD OF the White House men was therefore already up when the Beirut incident took their breath away. They had been planning limited retaliation missions, but this completely changed their scale and the politics of the situation.

In the first hours, it was easier to inveigh against scapegoats than to strike. Defense Secretary Weinberger called for retaliation against Iran – though this ran foul of the European allies and Japan, who have been working hard to prevent military escalation in the Persian Gulf from cutting off their oil supplies. Former Secretary of State Kissinger talked of the possibility of a joint US-Israeli blow against Syria, though he had no reasons to explain why the new prime minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir, would commit political suicide when the President of the United States was reluctant to join him. In making his debut as a Lebanon warlord, Reagan was discovering that he lacked the two basics of factional warfare in that land – the ability to commit massacres and the capacity to take casualties.

The casualty figure is the decisive one in American domestic politics. The effect of the Beirut incident will be to add to the large majority of Americans who don't consider Lebanon important enough to risk going to war and losing US lives – in late September, this was already 67 per cent, according to an ABC/*Washington Post* poll.

Support for the Congressional resolution allowing the President 18 months to pursue the erstwhile peacekeeping mission in Lebanon had split the Senate on party lines. The Republicans were in favour, the Democrats were opposed. In the House of Representatives, however, the Democrats themselves divided on the issue, allowing the President

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to win on a 270-161 vote.

The fateful decision by the House Democrats to fall into line with the President – against the opinion in their constituencies – came in two steps. The first was the decision by the House Speaker, Thomas (Tip) O'Neill. He had made up his mind at a White House briefing by Colonel McFarlane early in September. O'Neill, who had backed the Vietnam war for much the same reason, believes that the Administration should get tough with the Syrians, the Soviets and what are termed by the administration 'Lebanese surrogates'.

THE HOUSE DEMOCRATS split 134 to 130 against the President's policy. By himself, O'Neill could not have swung so many Democrats behind the President. This required a second step, led by Israel's strongest supporters on the house foreign affairs committee, Stephen Solarz and Tom Lantos. They dominated the committee vote and, on the floor of the House, they brought with them 18 of the 29 Jewish representatives. Together, they persuaded many wavering Democrats that the US and Israel shared a strategic interest in preventing Lebanon from falling, as they described the situation, to Syrian and Soviet control. The Israel partisans argued that the Marines were needed to obviate another Israeli expedition beyond the Awali River line. It was a case of Israel's Congressional supporters backing American military intervention to protect the Israelis from the casualties that had prompted their withdrawal a month ago.

This was easier for the House Democrats to accept in theory than in practice (before the Beirut casualties than after them) because, until now, the Administration's policy in Lebanon has been war on the cheap. The US stood ready to fight to the last Lebanese, who were obligingly paying cash for the arms and ammunition that the US was happy to sell them. As Rear Admiral James Watkins, the Chief of Naval Operations and acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explained at a briefing on 28 September, once the offshore firepower of the *USS New Jersey* and other ships had broken the 'foreign forces' and 'Syrian backed surrogates' dug in around Suq el-Gharb (no mention of the Druze), the US would aid the Lebanese Army in a move to wipe out the Palestinians based in Tripoli. 'If we get the elements in the South into some sort of political arrangement,' Watkins suggested, 'then we (sic) are going to have to look north and find out how to deal with that Palestinian issue.'

This skated very close to a breach of the explicit agreements that the President had reached with Congress, limiting the Marine role to the 1982 mandate for the multinational force signed by the Lebanese, and to the escape clause in the new Congressional resolution allowing 'such protective measures as may be necessary to insure the safety of the multinational force in Lebanon'. Admiral Watkins was unperturbed: 'Our people are getting some of the finest training for any future kinds of operations. So whether we are doing training off the coast of Puerto Rico or off the coast of Lebanon is somewhat irrelevant from a training standpoint to the Marines and US navy'.

To a President who always said that the Vietnam war was a noble enterprise, the possibility of slow escalation in Lebanon has never been as troubling as it has been for most Americans. To the Israel partisans within the House Democratic caucus, the risk to American lives has been worth running if Israeli casualties could be averted. This was the strategic alliance that has been exposed by the Beirut massacre. In the cant of last month's Congressional debate over Lebanon policy, neither side revealed its intentions. There is no hiding them now.

The Israel partisans will probably be forced by their electors to rejoin the Democratic consensus, leaving the President alone, running for re-election with a war on his hands. President Johnson knew he couldn't win in that position. He concealed his options until the 1964 election was secure. The Beirut bombing has come too early for President Reagan to keep his policy disguised. Senator Russell Long, Democrat from Louisiana and the second most senior Senator in the chamber, struck directly at Reagan after the bombing: 'It is a dirty trick to do on your own men . . . that a leader does this to his own troops.' □

USA

Hollow dollar

Wilfred Beckerman takes an ironic look at the reality behind official figures

THE LATEST *World Bank Atlas*, published by the World Bank in August, shows the USA as having a national product per head of $12,820 in 1981. Quite a lot, one might think, especially since it would be 40 per cent higher than Britain's in the same year. But, looking at the figures more closely, one is surprised to see that Switzerland's national product per head, at $17,430, is 36 per cent higher than that of the USA. Luxembourg comes next with a national product per head that is 25 per cent higher (thanks entirely to the rapid expansion of international banking and financial services) and it goes without saying that Sweden, Norway and Germany are also well above the USA.

Of course, one's first reaction is to dismiss the figures as typical of the sort of misleading results that one can get, if one uses the official exchange rate to convert the national income figures of various countries into a common currency (in this case the US dollar). Every tourist knows that, converted at official exchange rates, some countries appear to be 'cheap' and other countries 'expensive'. This merely means that the official exchange rates which, on the whole, are behind the World Bank figures referred to above, do not correspond to relative price levels – or to what are known in the jargon as 'purchasing power parities' (PPPs).

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development now regularly publishes estimates for most of its member countries on a PPP basis. Its latest estimates (for 1981) seem to confirm that the USA is still really richer than everybody else. For example, in 1981, on a PPP basis, the national product per head of the USA was 31 per cent higher than the average for the whole OECD, the next highest country being Luxembourg at 13 per cent above the average. But Japan is closing the gap, of course. In 1970, on the same basis, the USA was 57 per cent higher than Japan. In 1981 it was only 32 per cent higher. If their growth rates during the 1970s were to persist, their paths would cross in 16 years' time.

On the other hand, anybody who has spent any time in the USA knows that the comparisons based on official exchange rates may not be so crazy after all. One area in which the US has been losing its lead is in the quality of the goods and services it produces. On my latest trip to the USA I found that hardly anything worked any more. The bus into Manhattan from Kennedy Airport broke down on the way. The next day, the courtesy shuttle bus from one terminal in La Guardia airport to another had broken down without anybody being told about it, so that dozens of passengers were missing their connections because they stood around waiting for a non-existent bus. Simple gadgets don't seem to work any more. The plumbing is now chaotic – taps turn the wrong way and the water tastes so awful that 'Spring Water' is sold in the supermarkets in vast quantities to people who just want to use it to make a decent cup of coffee. At the Medical Centre, where I had to go to have a minor ailment treated, the weighing machine was about 10 per cent out, so I assume that the blood pressure gadget and the thermometer were equally guilty in feeding erroneous data into the advanced computer that would then spill out its erroneous and superfluous diagnosis.

Not for nothing have the US authorities decided to send the rocket engines for the Pershing II missiles back to the manufacturers for X-ray tests. In 16 tests earlier this summer the missile exploded twice, failed to operate properly two other times and badly missed its target in a fifth test. Similar tales are heard about the poor quality of American automobiles, although in this case it is being used by American auto parts manufacturers as an excuse to tighten up on imports. For it has been argued before the US International Trade Commission that it is the shoddy foreign counterfeits that are the cause of all the trouble.

In fact, of course, the general decline in the reliability and quality of American manufactured products has been going on for decades. That can be seen in innumerable areas where there is no question that it is the home-made genuine American article that is to blame. It is just one inevitable

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manifestation of what is basically wrong with the US economy and why, even if it is still the richest country in the world on a per head basis, it will not stay in that position for long. The reason is that the US economy has been ruined by its business schools. For many years students at business schools were taught that what really matters is not making, but marketing. The whole emphasis has been on sales, strategies, consumer analysis, market research, advertising packaging, sophisticated statistical analysis.

True, this makes a contrast to Britain, where shops will go to any lengths to avoid selling anything. They are happiest when they can explain that they are out of stock of warm clothes in winter or cool clothes in summer 'because there has been such a big demand for them lately', and so on. But, even when you have caught them red-handed in possession of the article you had asked for, they still try to persuade you that you would be better advised to go to their competitor down the road and leave the sales assistant in peace.

For many years after the war, concentration on selling was no great handicap. But sooner or later the USA was bound to wake up and find that everybody else (particularly the Japanese) can produce better quality cars, Hi-Fi equipment, TV and radio sets, cameras, video-tape recorders and, soon, computers. (In fact, contrary to widespread belief, the high quality of many current Japanese products is typical of a long-standing widespread Japanese tradition. The cheap shoddy toys exported by Japan before the war represented a deviation from Japanese customs that was enforced by Japan's temporary ignorance of contemporary Western production techniques and by the lack of the corresponding capital equipment.)

OF COURSE, as most people know, national product is not a very reliable indicator of economic welfare, let alone of the quality of life in some wider sense of the term. But there is little scope for the USA to make up for its low quality output and relatively very slow rate of technical progress by a higher quality of life in other respects. A US Department of Commerce publication, *Social Indicators, 1976*, reported that, according to a survey among the public of those aspects of their lives to which people attached most importance, a happy marriage came out top (74 per cent); yet, in view of the American switch to serial marriage, it appears that they have been generally less successful in attaining this goal than most other nations.

Also, everybody knows that it is still far more dangerous to walk around in large American cities than in Europe. This is the real reason why, in any big US city these days, one can see thousands of people 'jogging'. It is widely proclaimed that this is the era of health-consciousness in the USA, and that everybody has fallen prey to the current keep-fit craze. Don't believe it. In Washington, at any rate, the real reason everybody is jogging is that it is the only way one can get around without being mugged. You have to keep on the move, and the faster the better.

With the true textbook adaptiveness of a capitalist economy, the urban public has learnt to carry just enough money around to ensure that transactions with potential muggers are conducted in a business-like manner. The current minimum in Washington is about $25. If you are caught with less, you are likely to be beaten up by an indignant mugger. After all, the muggers are playing the socio-biology evolution game. Once the public knows what the score is, people will always carry the minimum around with them. It would be bad for business if people got the idea that, if somebody sticks them up and asks for their wallet, they can get away with pretending to be a poor devil whose wallet contains only $3 and some Food Stamps.

But even if urban violence in Britain is not as bad as in the States, it is following the same trend, as in most industrialised countries. And in other countries the growth rates of their measured national products have been higher than ours for decades, of course, so that they have at least some compensation. The one bright feature in the prospects for this country is that the professionalisation of urban violence is not likely to spread very far here, simply because after a few more years of Mrs Thatcher nobody will be able to pay up – apart from Japanese tourists. And they go about in groups anyway. □

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ARGENTINA

Bitter legacy

Leslie Crawford previews the coming elections

ARGENTINA IS poised to elect its first civilian government in seven years. The military defeat in the Falklands marked the beginning of tense negotiations between the armed forces and civilian groups to find an acceptable formula for an end to military rule. It soon became clear, however, that the generals would rather cling to power than face civilian retaliation – for a campaign of terror in which 30,000 people have disappeared; for the worst economic recession in the country's history; for mass unemployment and a war fought largely to shore up their flagging popularity. For the military, there can be no return to democracy without all parties agreeing to bury the past.

Of all the negotiators, the union bosses (who have long controlled the Peronist movement) have been most prepared to accept the military's conditions. It is widely believed that an understanding has been reached between the unions and the armed forces, whereby the military would be shielded from investigations into human rights abuses and, in return, would consent to the election of a 'moderate' Peronist candidate.

The close rapport between union bureaucrats and generals should come as no surprise. Perón was himself a military man and the labour government that he built in the 1940s was fashioned after Mussolini's labour code. 'Which is the strongest trade union in Argentina?' he would ask. 'The Armed Forces! I recommend to all workers their form of organisation, so as to gain the power and cohesion we soldiers have obtained.'

In March this year, the military relinquished its control of the Railways Union (135,000 members), together with US$10m of blocked funds, in its first act of goodwill towards the largest outlawed union federation, the CGT-RA. Since 1976, all of the important unions have been under military control and the provision of social welfare has been taken over by the State. In spite of this, most union activity has continued to be organised locally.

Sensing their increasing isolation, the union bosses have shown a growing interest in the political wing of the Peronist Movement. The leader of the CGT-RA, Lorenzo Miguel, was elected Vice President of the Peronist Party at its recent Congress. The accumulation of offices has given Miguel considerable power. The only person who could challenge his authority within the movement is Isabelita, Perón's widow, who succeeded him as President in 1974. But, although she is still President, she lives in exile in Spain and is unlikely to return.

LORENZO MIGUEL has the reputation of being a ruthless, mafioso-like politician. At the party conference, he secured key nominations for his supporters, sometimes by skill, sometimes by force. He is subject, at the moment, to two judicial inquiries: one accuses him of being a founder member of the notorious AAA (Alianza Anti-comunista Argentina), a right-wing paramilitary group responsible for hundreds of killings during the previous Peronist government; the other is an investigation into the murder of a former associate.

The attitude of his federation towards human rights is even less encouraging. Last month, the CGT-RA was visited by a delegation from the 'Madres de Plaza de Mayo', an organisation of mothers of the disappeared, with a petition requesting information on their missing children from the military. They were forcibly expelled from the premises after union officials had refused to discuss the issue.

Both Peronists and Radicals have loudly condemned the 'self-amnesty' that the generals have awarded themselves, absolving them of any responsibility for the crimes committed during the 'dirty war'. On paper, both parties want in-depth investigations by an independent judiciary. In reality, they know that this would be a lengthy and tortuous affair, likely to unearth too many awkward facts.

Already, a highly volatile situation has been created by an inquiry into the murder of two left-wing Peronist activists at the hands of the Buenos Aires police. The fact that the accused are being tried in a civilian, not a military, court has infuriated the officer corps. An anonymous communiqué said that the police had always operated on direct orders from the army and warned that 'our discipline is not such that, after having been used as a broom to sweep away the filthiest scum, we will now accept that they (the judiciary) should try to wipe us out as an example of the purification of the Republic'. It is very probable that the whole question of the *desaparecidos* will be dropped after the elections, in the interests of 'national unity'.

The Peronists have kept their side of the bargain and nominated a 'moderate' candidate to run for President. The choice of Italo Luder was not immediately obvious, for he is neither a union man nor working-class. A lawyer with a long career in politics, coming from the centre of the Peronist movement, he was chosen as a rallying point for Peronism's disparate groups (there are 47 political tendencies in Buenos Aires alone) and Lorenzo Miguel's patronage was certainly counted in his favour.

THE PERONISTS have been the largest political force in the country since 1945. Perón's 'social justice' policies and populist rhetoric were revolutionary in their time and won the support of the working class. The unions have provided a continuous base for the movement during the party's frequent proscriptions.

The Radicals have been beaten by the Peronists in every election since the 1940s, but, this time, they look set to mount their most serious challenge. They draw their main support from the middle classes plus a variety of anti-Peronist groups. Their Presidential candidate, Raúl Alfonsín, is running a highly personalised campaign.

The Radicals have set out to woo the working-class vote with an electoral programme which is strikingly similar to that of the Peronists. Both parties call for the redistribution of income, economic growth, rescheduling of the foreign debt and an independent foreign policy which should concentrate on regaining the Falklands by diplomatic negotiations.

Neither manifesto acknowledges the difficulties ahead. If the international banks insist on an IMF programme as a condition for rescheduling the US$9 billion of foreign debt, then none of the electoral pledges will be fulfilled. This will no doubt increase the frustration of the working class, which has shown that it is prepared to fight hard to regain a decent standard of living. There have been two general strikes in as many months to protest against the erosion of real wages (inflation is running close to 300%).

When the military took over seven years ago, Argentina was wracked by administrative chaos, hyper-inflation and political stalemate. Far from resolving any of these problems, the dictatorship has compounded them. Its legacy is a bitter one. □

MIDDLE EAST

Paymaster to all

Rose Pugh exclusively reveals the Saudis' role in Beirut

Rome

SAUDI ARABIA has paid for most of the arms and ammunition used by the Lebanese army to attack the Druze and their Moslem allies in the recent fighting in Lebanon. This was inadvertently disclosed during the visit to Washington of the Italian socialist Prime Minister, Bettino Craxi.

While in Washington on 20-21 October, Craxi told the Americans that Italy was proposing a reconstruction aid programme for Lebanon to be financed by the US, European countries and Saudi Arabia. Craxi's idea is to create financial incentives for the Lebanese factional leaders to sink their differences.

The idea is not new. There have been several efforts by the Gemayel government to create a multinational reconstruction programme since the end of the 1982 fighting with Israel. However, pledges of economic aid have remained modest so long as the

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political instability and fighting continue. What is new is the disclosure that Saudi Arabia is *already* paying most of the Gemayel government's bills for weapons. In the last 12 months the Lebanese contracted for $420 million worth of US arms and ammunition. Most of the contracts were hurriedly completed during the September battles in the Shouf mountains and since the 26 September ceasefire took effect.

Although the US had offered $100 million in loans (at market interest rates) to help finance these purchases, the Lebanese have drawn on less than half that amount. It is estimated that Saudi Arabia has already paid more than $300 million in military aid to President Gemayel this year.

The Saudi role has angered the Lebanese Druze and Shiites, who have borne the brunt of the fighting with the Lebanese army. But they have been obliged to stifle their protests because Saudi cash is also financing the flow of arms to the Syrians. One of the reasons the US has muted its criticism of the Saudi-Syrian connection is that Washington is happy at having the Saudis pay for arms that the Reagan Administration is reluctant to give the Lebanese for free. The Italian disclosure may be intended to embarrass the American authorities, who are said to be planning to reduce their assistance to Lebanon in the next budget. This would leave the Saudis, the Italians and the French with an even greater share of the burden of preserving Gemayel. □

USSR

Moscow spokesperson

Fred Halliday looks at a Soviet view of détente

GEORGI ARBATOV, Director of the Institute of United States and Canadian Studies in Moscow and member of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee, was in London this week to promote his new book on East-West relations*. Arbatov comes from a generation of Soviet specialists who, after fighting in the Second World War, were allocated to the Institute of International Relations in the late 1940s. Known as the *mezhdunarodniki*, or 'internationalists' they have since staffed and run the dozen or so specialist units, employing over 3,000 members, which carry out long-range analysis and policy recommendation for the Soviet leadership. It is said in Russia that if you want to go to the very top you must either go through the military apparatus, or be the son of a worker. But if you want to do the next best thing, and get to the second rung of influence, then you should become a *mezhdunarodniki*.

Camera Press

Arbatov: one-time consultant to Andropov

For years Arbatov has explained with tired, but persistent, fluency his view of why East-West relations have reached their present pass. He contrasts a period of 'natural competition' or détente, something he regards as normal, with the counter-attack on détente that has recently been underway in the West, and particularly in the USA. Arbatov sees two main reasons for this switch in US policy. One is a change in élite opinion, born of a refusal to accept parity with the USSR. The other is a change in popular sentiment, a result of the instability and obsession with strength shown by US public opinion.

The interviews that comprise this book were conducted over several years and it is not clear whether Arbatov now thinks that détente can still be saved. He implies that a second Cold War has not yet begun, but warns that, if it does so, it will be far more dangerous than the first. There are a much greater number of nuclear bombs in existence and many more states are involved. The risks and dangers of a crisis getting out of control are therefore all the larger. The discussion ranges over a wide range of topics, covering the current phase of US-Soviet relations, the breakdown of détente in the 1970s and the earlier history of Soviet-US relations. Arbatov reminds his audience that the USA, together with Britain and several other states, invaded the Soviet Union after 1917 and that Washington refused to recognise the USSR until 1933. He also stresses the asymmetry of historical experience with regard to war that distinguishes the USA and Russia: 'It often occurs to me that the Americans have been exclusively fortunate in their history, perhaps too fortunate, to be capable of fully understanding and harbouring genuine sympathy towards nations with more difficult histories.'

This book went to press before the latest turns of the screw in Reagan's campaign against his foes – the Korean airliner incident, the apparent deadlock in Geneva, and the invasion of Grenada. But these events would only bear out Arbatov's view of a US system wracked by rhetoric and inconsistency and unwilling to seek serious negotiations on major world issues. His remarks on the messianism, jingoism and egocentrism of US foreign policy could have come as well from a European conservative.

Arbatov is strongest in his discussion of the recent history of East-West relations, weakest in his justifications for Soviet policy towards those within the bloc. The chapter on human rights and dissidents is appalling, with neither the Dutch interviewer nor Arbatov acquitting themselves with any credibility. Bluff authoritarianism cannot justify silence on such recent issues as psychiatric torture and the repression of the Moscow Trust group. More generally the attempt to portray Soviet society as a vibrant democratic body carries little conviction. Arbatov is right to stress the enormous improvement in living standards and in the respect for legality in the USSR in the postwar period, but he would have been better advised to avoid attempts to whitewash what remains a deeply centralised system.

In attempting to present an acceptable image of Soviet policy, Arbatov also goes too far in conceding political points to the US centre-right establishment, who constitute his main audience. Time and again, he states that the USSR has achieved 'rough parity' with the USA in military matters. This is designed to counter the Western argument of Soviet superiority and to reassure domestic opinion about Soviet strength. Yet the fact, as every NATO general and admiral knows, is that the USSR and its allies are far weaker in overall terms than the forces of NATO. The claim of 'parity' is a myth, made for whatever strategic and patriotic reasons and it conceals the deep inequality of the conflict of East and West.

Arbatov also shies away from one of the central features of the current East-West deadlock, namely the Third World. The crisis of Vietnam and Iran, Angola, Ethiopia and Nicaragua, played a far more important part in undermining détente than he admits and the USSR played a greater role in helping some of these revolutions to succeed than Arbatov implies. Of equal importance with the arms race in explaining why the USA has veered away from détente is the US refusal to accept revolutions, and the Soviet support for them, in the Third World. Those resisting US policy in the Third World will be relieved to know that Soviet policy is not quite as bland as Professor Arbatov would have us believe. □

Cold War of Detente? The Soviet Viewpoint, by Georgi Arbatov, Zed Press, £16.95, £4.95 paper

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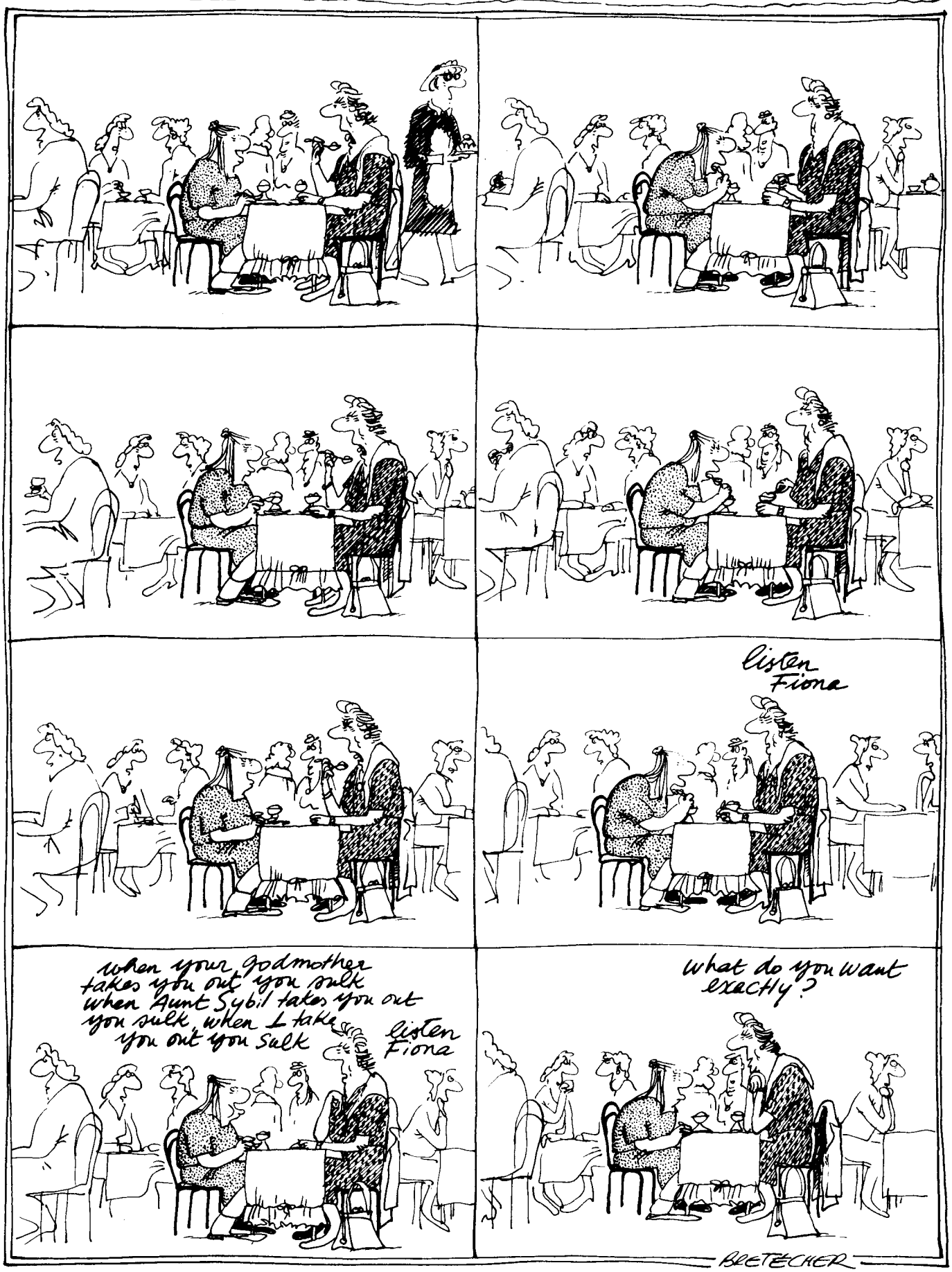
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LETTERS

Crime waves

Richard Kinsey & Jock Young, London N16

According to Paul Gilroy and Joe Sim (*NS* 21 October) the real problem is not crime but the manipulation of popular opinion tied to the introduction of 'counter-insurgency thinking and policing' like that in Northern Ireland. 'Crime is only a footnote in the history of policing', the real aim being, as they put it in an article in *Socialist Register* 1982, to create a situation in which 'the police are in a good position to mould and even create fear in such a way as to justify an increase in their powers' (p50). Quite so, but if the threat of crime is largely mythical, as these writers, together with Max Farrar (Letters 14 October), suggest, why would anyone be fooled by the rhetoric of law and order? The police know that their trump card is the reality of crime and victimisation and for so long as crime is relegated, not to a footnote in the history of policing but to a footnote in socialist thinking, they will win every trick.

Gilroy and Sim note that the fear of crime is 'real enough' but that there is a 'gulf between (it) and the actual chances of becoming a victim'. This point strangely echoes Metropolitan Police Commissioner Newman in his recent attempt to rid himself of the problem of dealing with the vast majority of crime. In actuality the risk rates for women, black people and the poor in the inner city are considerable. This is why feminists chose to stage 'Reclaim the Night' demonstrations in Leeds 8 – a fact which Max Farrar perversely sees as a racist attack on black men.

We do not accept Tory definitions of law and order as Caroline Wright suggests (Letters, 14 October). Far from it; nor do the mass of working-class people who despise burglary, sexual attacks, assault and mugging. Gilroy and Sim are correct that the working-class population are heterogeneous: but one thing that does unite women, blacks, whites, the employed and the unemployed is a dislike of crime. Indeed the lower down the class structure the greater the risk of crime. The poor need and demand justice and order more than the rich. It is not the poor who are a 'new dangerous class'; it is they who are a class in danger.

Eighty-four per cent of crimes are reported by the public to the police and the working class report more crimes than the middle class because they suffer more. The majority of criminals are not 'Robin Hoods'; rather, they display a very conventional individualism. They are, as one ex-professional put it, 'poor people without access to the Stock Exchange'. It is not policing *per se* but the structure of policing that must be changed. As Steve Bundred of the GLC Police Committee put it, we must turn 'the police force into a police service'.

At heart Gilroy and his associates believe that police reform is utopian because they do not hold with reform in general. This is made absolutely clear in *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) where Gilroy criticises the European Left as consisting of 'moribund socialist parties' which 'cultivate populist potential . . . in answer to their growing marginality' (page 276). These writers have appointed themselves the critics of any attempt to ameliorate present-day conditions on the platform that to do so would only buttress the status quo.

Realistic socialists, in contrast, do not despise the anxieties of the people. They do not believe these anxieties are manufactured by conspiracy. They start from the real problems now, harnessing the amelioration of the present to the transformation of the future.

House proud

Chris Holmes, Labour Housing Group

Peter Hain and Nigel Stanley object to the way in which Chris Hamnett counterposed their views to those of the Labour Housing Group (*NS* 14 October). Their reply (Letters 21 October) exposes flaws both in their attitudes and their analysis.

It is breathtakingly arrogant to claim some special experience of the electorate's perceptions of Labour's policies. Contrary to their implication, the Labour Housing Group consists of Party members who have worked on the doorstep in elections, fought as candidates and shared in struggles by housing groups and tenants' organisations. Some of our members have been doing that for considerably longer than Peter Hain or Nigel Stanley.

The Labour Housing Group's statement on the 'right to a home' recognises the reasons for the popularity of Tory policies on council house sales with those able to take advantage of them. It appreciates how opposition to these policies has, at times, appeared paternalistic, and it identifies the causes of the stigmatisation of council housing in its current form.

We have just published a 'Charter for Council Housing', which sets out a radical programme for improving the quality of public housing, transforming the way it is managed and strengthening tenants' rights. The distinctive characteristic of the Labour Housing Group's contribution is our insistence that policies on council house sales cannot be divorced from an analysis of the intolerable inequalities within the housing market. The imperative need is for radical changes in the distribution of subsidies, removal of the crippling constraints on local authority housing programmes and an extension of individual and collective rights to both owners and tenants.

At our AGM on 19 November, members of LHG will be considering detailed resolutions on the direction of Labour's future housing policies. We understand well enough the need to project a more convincing alternative to Tory policies – yet that must be done, not by embracing narrow expediency, but by campaigning for housing policies based on a commitment to equality, justice and freedom of choice.

Blackboard jungle

Carol Atack, Wakefield

Thank you for the *New Statesman* articles (Miscellany 7 and 14 October) exposing the journalistic techniques of Ms Gloria Stewart. My father, Mr C. E. Atack, was the NUT representative at Eastmoor High School during Mr Schafer's headship and, therefore, probably one of the teachers whom Ms Stewart labelled 'militants' and virtually accused of professional inadequacy in her efforts to convey to *Daily Mail* readers the 'success' of Mr Schafer's policies. ▷

Lucky Jim

How you'll envy him when he solves
Kingsley Amis' question in the
Great Spectator Car Chase Competition
and wins the mint condition 1934
Daimler limousine that's first prize.
Plus the special British Airways
Spectator Student Prize of two return
tickets to anywhere in the world
on the British Airways network.

The Spectator
75p weekly.
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The media attention and uninformed criticism begun by these articles caused considerable distress to the staff at Eastmoor, especially when added to their stressful working conditions. Mr Schafer's dismissal was principally occasioned by his 'style of management'. The professionalism of Eastmoor's staff in continuing their work under Mr Schafer is indisputable. Ms Stewart's allegation that the school was a 'jungle' till Mr Schafer's arrival was very wounding to the staff, many of whom have devoted themselves to the school and its pupils since its opening in the late '60s.

There is a great deal of information as yet unrevealed about this case and the *New Statesman* has helped by publicly discrediting Ms Stewart.

Means testing

David Craig, Burton in Kendal

I was delighted to see that Walter Brierley's *The Means Test Man* had been reprinted (*NS* 14 October). But it is frustrating to be told by your reviewer, David Douglass, that 'a reappraisal is long overdue', since that is exactly what Michael Egan and I offered in 'The Nullity of the Slump', a chapter in our *Extreme Situations* (Macmillan, 1979).

The centrepiece of the chapter is an account of *The Means Test Man* which presents it as the most realistic and poignant novel to come from England in the 1930s. Douglass seems to agree with the lefties who 'despised' the book originally because it failed to 'find the class answer' to slump. How philistine a demand to put upon a novel. When novelists did proffer such an 'answer', it always came out as so much vainglorious rhetoric – for example, the speeches near the end of *The Jungle* or the bursts of Old Testament prophecy that disfigure *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Whether they like it or not, socialist critics should face the fact that the radical novels of the 1930s which worked as literature were too sober and tragic to deal in 'answers', whether they were American (*Studs Lonigan* and *USA*), British (*The Means Test Man* and *A Scots Quair*), or French (*Man's Estate*).

Anti-racism and the union

Peter Dawson, General Secretary, National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education

It is depressing to encounter in the *New Statesman* an article about a recent dispute, in which my union was involved, littered with incorrect information, distorting the facts of the situation and slamming the union for a principled stance which had overwhelming support among the membership at local and national levels. I refer to the inflammatory article by Amrit Wilson (*NS* 21 October) concerning a dispute at Hendon Police Cadet School. Ms Wilson apparently relied for her information primarily on people who were at odds with the majority of NATFHE members on how to fight racism.

I must first of all categorically deny the allegation that a decision has been taken to expel any member involved in the dispute. A complaint has been made against certain members and will be dealt with under the procedures laid down, which provide for those involved to have full opportunity of making their own representations. The complaint has not yet been heard. No decision has been taken and no Association spokesperson has suggested to anyone that expulsions are in the offing.

Secondly, a 'series of measures' has not been taken against the Kilburn Polytechnic Branch of NATFHE, by the union's leadership or anyone else. Thirdly, NATFHE does not believe that racism is best tackled in an individualistic way with television revelations as the major tactic. This union has a long record of campaigning against racism, which we regard as a cancer to be eradicated by organised pressure applied with the maximum force by trade unions and other organisations. When we seek to apply such pressure we endeavour to do so with the broadest possible involvement of our members. It is tragic that those who turned first to the media with essays containing such important evidence of racism among police cadets have consistently refused to make them available to their own union. It is tragic that Mr Fernandes' colleagues, many of whom had a fine record of anti-racist work and who were later expected to support him, were never asked how they felt that the attitudes expressed in the essays should be tackled.

Contrary to Amrit Wilson's assertion, although John Fernandes did not *seek* such assistance, I wrote to him offering the union's services, but received no reply. Despite this, NATFHE acted promptly in both the matter of Mr Fernandes' exclusion from the Cadet School and that of police training. The NATFHE 'police group', to which Ms Wilson refers, did in fact produce two reports, the second of which received wide publicity (though not, as I recall, in the *New Statesman*). This report called for immediate action on race relations training for police forces and the implementation of the recommendations of the Police Training Council Working Party report on this. It also made detailed proposals on the nature of that training, stressed the importance of lay involvement and called for improved screening of police recruits, the monitoring of racial discrimination by police officers, the recognition of racist behaviour as a disciplinary offence and early retirement of offending officers where necessary.

NATFHE has been involved in negotiations with the Hendon Police Cadet School and the Home Office to secure improvements in the multi-cultural/anti-racist component of police training. Our members who continue to work at the School have in fact secured a substantial increase in the time devoted to this element. Finally, during the dispute, lecturers at the School indicated by substantial majorities in two votes that they wished to continue teaching. It was the union's view that a withdrawal of labour would do nothing to resolve the situation at the School, was an opting out of the struggle against racism and would lead to consequential redundancies. Brent assured the staff at the Cadet School that their jobs would be secure if they withdrew, and a minority did so. Brent is now negotiating with NATFHE for up to 12 redundancies.

Kurt Metzer, Wembley, Middx

I have read Amrit Wilson's article (*NS* 21 October) with great interest. Conscience impels me to write to you, because, for me, this is a case of 'though I disagree with someone's views, I will fight to the death for their right to express them'.

The four individuals concerned have, in my view, no case to answer. They acted as advocates for John Fernandes, who expressly did not wish to use the case law procedures. They may have left-wing views, as I have right-wing views; neither is a reason for expulsion from an academic union. They had branch support for almost every detail – I know, because I supported them at times and opposed their tactics at times. For me, racism is linked with anti-semitism. John Fernandes at one time edited Catholic books to remove anti-semitic remarks from them – that was his task.

The idea of these four being wild extremists is fantastic. The whole business is a frightful mess, and victimisation of individuals will not help.

Geraldine Lander and Virginia Hjelmaa, Kilburn Polytechnic

We are members of the Kilburn Polytechnic branch of NATFHE and write regarding your timely and informative article (*NS* 21 October) about the four members of our branch who have been threatened with disciplinary action by the union for their activities in defence of John Fernandes – that is, their actions against racism and in support of academic freedom. We wish to make two separate points.

First, expulsion is only one of the possible consequences of disciplinary action. Second, and more important, in thus singling out our officers for disciplinary action, the NEC of NATFHE ignores the fact that the officers were carrying out branch policy decided by the members, democratically. We feel that such policies are the responsibility of the branch, not solely of the officers. The branch has voted to do all it can to persuade the NEC to drop the charges.

No shekels in the Bank

Benjamin Sella, Histadrut, London W1

Gaza/West Bank/Israeli relations are complicated enough without Ms Pugh's facile analysis (*NS* 7 October). According to her, no future government in Israel would consider giving up control of the territories, 'because of clear cut economic imperatives'.

First of all, Ms Pugh has her history wrong. Her assertion that 'the Israeli economy had been suffering an acute labour shortage before the (Six Day 1967) war', is patent nonsense. 1966-'67 was the period of Israel's deepest, most prolonged economic recession, accompanied by a surge of unemployment. The government had to sponsor emergency works projects to provide income for thousands of jobless citizens.

Following the takeover of the territories by Israel, in 1967, Histadrut's executive took the position that the workers in the West Bank and Gaza should be permitted to join the Israeli trade unions. The (Labour) government did not agree, but Histadrut nevertheless insists that workers from the territories be given the opportunity of enjoying the economic and social gains won by the unions over the years. This is not only because the labour movement in Israel adheres to humanitarian values, but is a matter of enlightened self-interest. Nowhere do workers welcome the influx of a large, low paid, unorganised mass of workers.

As to the question of investment, it should be remembered that, before the territories came under Israeli rule, Jordan had 19 unhampered years to build an infrastructure, create industries and organise social services in the West Bank, but did virtually nothing. Gaza, during the same period, was contained by Egypt behind sealed borders as one big festering refugee camp.

I don't know how Ms Pugh has drawn the balance to decide that control of the territories has been of such tremendous economic advantage to Israel. The real cost of security, administration and services is hardly covered by the rather meagre tax revenues raised in Gaza and the West Bank. I cannot imagine anybody in Israel urging that we hold on to them, for *economic* reasons, one day longer than is necessary.

The real imperatives for Israel's staying (or leaving) focuses, for almost all Israelis, on security. Leaving requires a viable, safe alternative to the status quo. The 'Greater Israel' advocates in our country lay claim to the territories on religious/historical grounds, as well. Economics is not, for anyone, the issue.

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Jon Cook

Sense and sensibility

TOWARDS 2000 renews a connection with some of Raymond Williams's earlier work and reminds us of the most distinctive feature of Williams's writing: a mode of enquiry which takes as its subject the whole social formation and links the minutiae of a particular feeling or self-image with the most general and powerful trends of political and economic organisation. The second chapter of *Towards 2000* is a reprint of 'Britain in the Sixties', the concluding section of *The Long Revolution*. Re-reading that chapter now, some 20 years after its first publication, is an uncanny experience; we are now able to see it as an accurate assessment of all those tendencies in British society which have culminated in Thatcherism. Against what was then a common assumption of steady economic expansion within an achieved democracy, Williams saw the evidence of a very different kind of society: one whose economic prosperity was heavily dependent on the prosperity of other national economies; one where the very possibility of social planning and purpose was threatened by restrictive definitions of people as consumers of marketable goods; and one in which the development of democracy was held in check by the calm insistence that we had the thing already, that democracy consisted in the right to vote, rather than the right to participate in decision-making.

What Williams offered as an alternative was a vision of society not passively accepted but actively shaped by its members. This would require an extension of creativity into the planning of new kinds of institutions antithetical to conceptions of the sovereignty of market forces, just as it would replace the appeal to freedom used to justify those conceptions by an extension of democracy into areas of economic life previously seen as beyond democratic control. Twenty years later Williams's alternative has not been taken up, and the socially destructive tendencies he discerned in the early Sixties have become more pronounced.

The temptation of any successful Jeremiah is to be reproachful but that is not Williams's way. *Towards 2000* is not a modest appendix to *The Long Revolution*. Rather, there is a transformation, an invitation to breathe a new air, and this is indicated in various ways. The national perspective of *The Long Revolution* is transcended here as Williams's analysis necessarily takes him into questions of internal and global relations. Williams's work has always been an offering of choices – either the continuation of the old, vicious muddle or the possibility of a fully social world, equitable and free – and *Towards 2000* is no exception, but now the choices are offered with a measured but insistent urgency: either we take up the challenge to make a new kind of social life or we shall die. One of the numerous strengths of Williams's book is to make us see this without recourse to hysteria or apocalyptic ranting.

Towards 2000
RAYMOND WILLIAMS *Chatto* £9.95

One important source for the authority of *Towards 2000* is Williams's own socialism, a socialism which emerges from a distinct, even idiosyncratic manner of argumentation and writing. Williams incorporates a critique of received forms of thought as reflected in the dominant meanings of certain common words: work, employment, redundancy, class, and so on. But this critique is joined to a social theory concerned with the fundamental relations between economy, culture and individual experience. Beyond this there is a further activity, the formulation of policy, at once an identification of the need for change and a recommendation of how change might be effected. But, then, beyond this again there is something more remarkable: not simply the amalgam of established intellectual modes of critique, theory and policy formulation, but a reaching out to popular and everyday forms of experience and memory, belief and emotion.

THE RESULT is both a restatement of certain socialist principles and a deepening, educative enquiry into what it now means to be a socialist. Williams stresses again and again the importance of the common ownership and control of the means of production. But this is always more than the rehashing of the old pieties, because Williams argues the case for socialism in the context of an analysis of capitalism's contemporary, global form. Socialism is not the frightening antithesis to an established and secure order. Rather it is advanced as the alternative to a particularly vicious management of change which offers, at the personal level, depression, starvation in the midst of abundance, the crushing of hope, and, at the international and global level, increasingly authoritarian modes of rule, the devastation of natural resources and the threat of genocidal massacre. Williams has one telling formulation for this complex of tendencies: Plan X, a mode of living in which any conception of a long-term future is sacrificed to short-term competitive advantage. *Towards 2000* urges us to get our heads out of the trough of personal ambition and acquisition long enough to see that, even on the soberest estimate, Plan X is leading us literally nowhere very fast.

Not, of course, that the alternative is going to be easy; Williams does not argue for socialism as the soft option. That is precisely its Plan X version: lots of good things all round with a minimum of work and effort. Indeed, Williams's account of socialism diverges sharply from some of its current definitions. He sees how deeply complicit the Trades Union movement has become in acquiring short-term competitive advantage at the enormous cost of sacrificing the vital connection between particular and general interest. He sees, too, how the Labour Party has become a limited vehicle of change since it constantly offers itself as an alternative national government when the current mode of the nation state is little more than the enlisting of popular loyalties in the service of continuing class domination. The alternative is not the abandonment of the nation in the name of an abstract, universal class, the proletariat or the workers, but a re-working of immediate attachment and historical identification through forms of local, self-managing democracy, which in their turn have to be connected with forms of international governance which supercede the nation state.

Towards 2000 offers the intensification and the extension of relationship. To do this much lumber has to be cleared away, many cherished assumptions done away with, many kinds of fashionable radicalism criticised. Williams envisages the possibility of a new, active alliance of alternative cultural and political forces – feminism, the ecology movement, the peace movement – with the traditional institutions of the labour movement. Only in such an alliance will the former become fully popular and the latter

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fully progressive. A great many things will be required to make such an alliance possible and among them will be a new kind of consciousness. Indeed, it is one of Williams's most significant extensions of socialism that he affirms both belief and emotion as material forces in society and not exclusively the ghostly effects of the 'superstructure' or ideology. This affirmation finds a compelling focus in the book's final chapter, 'Resources for a Journey of Hope'. Here Williams comes at the fundamental and long-standing model of our civilisation in the triumphant exploitation of nature, of other people and ourselves as a limitless raw material. The fact that this orientation has been the source of material progress in the past is not justification for its grotesque forms in the present. Williams finds an alternative not in the mania for production, whether in its capitalist version or its Marxist mode, but in a new orientation based in 'a broader sense of human need and a closer sense of the physical world'. It is easy, but entirely trivial and dangerous, to dismiss this as Utopian. Williams's book presents a challenge and opportunity to transform the nature of our institutions in the active reshaping of our desires. *Towards 2000* is a sign of the hope that it recommends and our gratitude for the book must find expression in making its arguments practicable. □

Two poems by Vincent Buckley

Naming of peoples

In the superb reductions of print
it seems all right to call them
by names they never heard or used:
the Halberd People, the Blue Spear People.
If peoples were still named after their weapons
we would be called
the Projectile People, or Those Who Kill from Afar,
the Spitting Poison People or Anthrax Minders.
On the great lowlands rugged with grass
we squat beside snout and muzzle;
we are growing moustaches
and learning laws of trajectory. Our films
are of painted, unrazed small towns.
On the jetfighter's broad jaw
we have painted: Homing Pigeon.

Glans normalis

In the first dark of morning, when trees
skittered against the sky's wet weave,
its lights made a half-circle of distance,
each light hard as a stem; the garden green was raining.
Useless to plan defence while talking war;
for men of action, war's the tutorial.
The half-morning flicks on and off like midnight.
No good talking Defence when every News
keeps palping the gland of war: *glans normalis*
swelling softly away there in everyone's fancy.
The warships nudge the swell of water
off Salvador, shaping up for Managua,
bumping like stock cars. 'Only manoeuvres',
just like kids mucking about. They steam and glide
in the glittery lead of the water,
Bay of Hope, of Spices, Resolution Bay,
all that: nosing blindly for their lost wars.

PHOTOGRAPHY
Peter Dormer

Dis-engagement

Black and White Memories: Photographs 1948-1969
DAVID BAILEY, text by MARTIN HARRISON
Dent £20

Clopp clipp, clipp clopp we go wearily with Martin Harrison who tells us that David Bailey, as a child, would follow 'George the milkman as his horse plodded along the road, going very slowly so that the deliveries could be made but never quite stopping'. Which makes the milkman one up on Harrison who has so little to deliver about individual photographs that we are treated to facts such as that the boy Bailey took his dog Major for walks and the Sixties man Bailey encouraged his sitters with 'Marvellous, darling, super, super, a bit to the left Chief, that way doll, great, marvellous, marvellous'. A technique obviously acquired from talking to the milkman's horse.

Harrison says that among photography critics David Bailey's reputation has suffered because they invariably discussed Bailey's photographs 'from a left-wing or at least overtly political viewpoint'. We are to treat these pictures as art and instead attend to the *formal* aspects of each fashion print. You are to be engaged with the interplay of texture and light and the marvellous juxtaposition of a skirt's herringbone pattern with the stark, white plane of the background and through Calvinism thus banish thoughts of voyeurism, sexism and all *that*. This approach is nonsense. Many of Bailey's fashion pictures for magazines such as *Vogue* and *Queen* (the book only goes as far as 1969) are very good at their job – which is entertainment, glamour, sex and flogging clothes by creating styles that can be constantly changed in order to keep the money flowing.

It is true that Bailey got a lot out of his models who, like the intelligent actresses they were, worked for him to produce small theatrical events but, although Bailey managed more than most to make his models appear human, the psychology of the model was no more the point of a fashion picture than the aesthetics of whatever abstract patterns it happened to contain.

There are many portraits in this book, mostly of men, and it is interesting that these sitters are clearly not models or actors in someone else's play but actors in their own. They have more – but not complete – control over how they present themselves to the camera. Thus the portraits of Arnold Wesker or Peter Ustinov, for example, are exciting compositionally but both Wesker and Ustinov are as guarded as hell. The people who come off worse, with justice, are the Kray brothers who are not intelligent enough to want to disguise their brutal appearance.

Critics understandably query fashion pictures because they transparently excite and feed fantasies about sex and power and, more often than not, women are the losers in these fantasies. However, since Harrison is so keen to be Bailey's poodle it is surprising that he did not fend off the critics by pointing out that even in social-realist photography of the poor, handicapped and

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aged, an equally dubious excitement is encouraged by offering people the chance to gawp at other people's manifest discomfort. Photographs of all kinds are double edged and one understand's Bailey's own scepticism about coffee-table books of social conscience pictures from which people undoubtedly enjoy a *frisson* of pleasure.

Nonetheless, the frenetic materialist self-indulgence of the fantasies portrayed by Bailey's Sixties photographs, tempered though they are by the glittering-prize winner portraits of the men (the significance of the equation of women as objects, men as subjects in these photographs will not escape *NS* readers) does pall after a while because of the values they represent. □

JOURNALISM
Justin Wintle

People as clichés

Life as a Party
TINA BROWN *Deutsch* £6.95

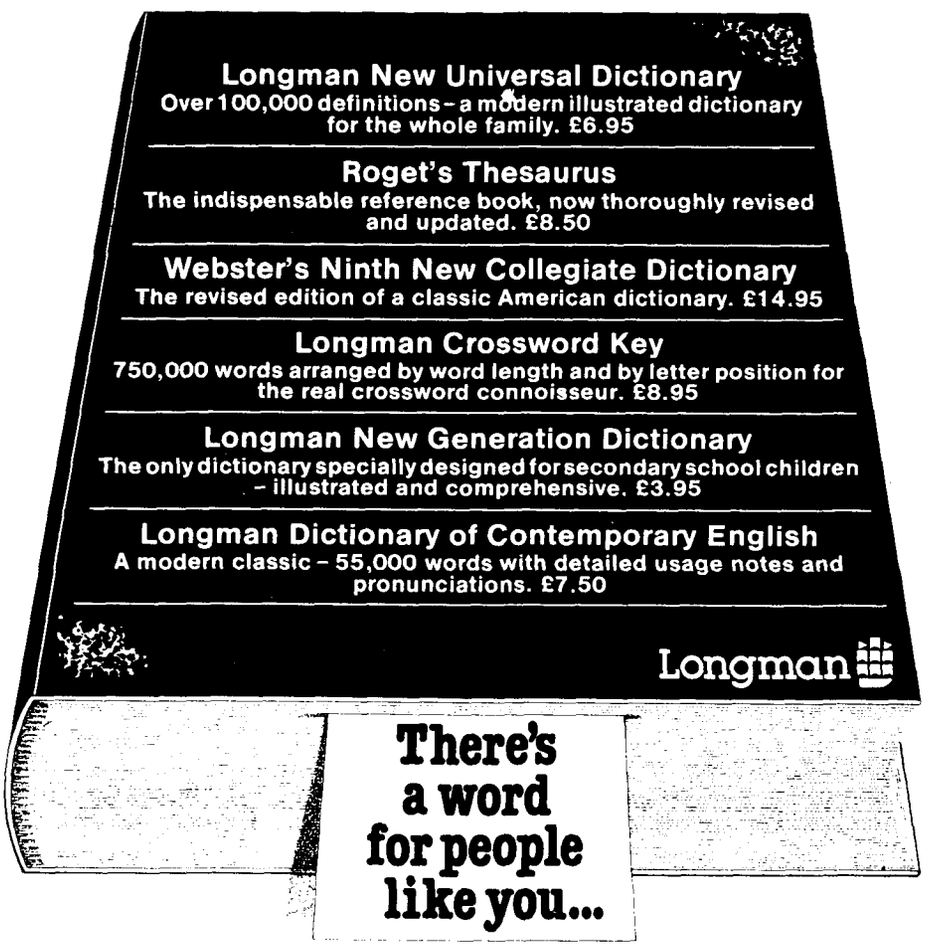
You know who Tina Brown is, of course. She's the envy of every female journalist this side of 40, including I guess Tina Brown. At 26 (or was it 25?) she became editor of *Tatler*, and overnight transformed it into something that almost mattered. That was in '79. In '78 she had been voted Young Journalist of the Year. These days young writers like and are encouraged to make it quickly. At least, that's what a few of them have done, starting from the mid-Seventies. And there's a knack to it. It doesn't matter that your experience is limited, or that you have no elaborated view about anything in particular, though a private education and three years at Oxford, more rarely Cambridge, is *de rigueur*. The big thing is to know how to sneer. Not in a classist way, but *à la mode*. You take on the world as you find it and account its particulars as defects. The fast route is to attack its celebrities, then you can be pretty sure of getting your own name in the media. Ring up a celebrity, tell him you want an interview, offer him lunch at Lorenzo's if there's any resistance, go to his apartment/townhouse/Tudor manor, then write a piece about what you see, what you observe, not what you hear. The writer as photographer, the writer as him or herself an embryo celebrity.

Thus did Tina Brown prepare to meet her bloom. To put it in such terms is, of course, to impose her own techniques of caricature. Will she mind? She shouldn't. She writes too well to be written off. What's left out is the bald fact that to succeed, even as a pusher of poisoned pen-grenades, requires talent. There is an art to sneering *à la mode* and Miss Brown (who is also Mrs Harold Evans) knows it. The joy of *Life as a Party* is that it sneers precisely at those people one (a) imagines most regularly sneer at others, and (take it either way) (b) would most like to sneer at oneself. All the ornamental dross are invited: Michael Fish, Mark Shand, Joan Collins, April Ashley, Dewi Sukarno, Margaret of Argylle, Bianca Jagger, Roddy Llewellyn, Michael of Kent, the Emmanuels, Molly Parkin. All the born-again snobs.

Yet this is a peculiarly disjuncted book, both *qua* book, and *qua*: what? – credit-card journalism? There are 22 chapterettes, all of them, except the first and possibly the last, pulled from the *Tatler*. Or so at least one imagines, for nothing explicit is said either about the provenance of the book's contents individually, or when they first appeared. And, although each piece is recognisable as a variation on a theme, each remains detached from the rest. As a collection it doesn't amount to more than a collection; it does not, for example, achieve the penetration of Duncan Fallowell's (auto)biography of April Ashley (*April's Odyssey*), a much warmer, if necessarily idiosyncratic, investigation of the same social milieu. Both writers pursue the picaresque in poncy places, both depend upon the cleverly manipulated cliché for their effects, but whereas Fallowell allows his clichés to mingle promiscuously with genuine ideas, Miss Brown aims hers straight at her subjects and they bounce right back. Her people therefore are clichés. It is that sort of party. There are a lot of lines, a lot of quips. ('When you go to the gym, you don't want to conjure up a symphony orchestra,' says Estee Lauder. 'That's why I invented Alliage, the perfect fragrance to go jogging.') Only in the last piece however, the swan-song of a gossip columnist called Timothy Swallow, does the mask begin to slip off. But even here there is contrivance, a too-direct dependence on the mannered esquisse of Tom Wolfe, shot through with Oxonian cadence.

As the author herself admits, she has a problem with the milieu. Her task at *Tatler* was to broaden, not replace, its constituency. What had been a magazine for nobs had to become the magazine for nobs *and* mediaites. Her impulse as a journalist is to cast an equally cold eye on both ends of the narrow spectrum, but just because she is *Tatler*'s editor she finds herself before the firing squad, half nob, half mediacrat. And it is not, I'm afraid, a tension that gives rise to Art, though it does give rise to moments of unbelievable hubris. Indeed, compared with Miss Brown's earlier collection (*Loose Talk*), *Life as a Party* pulls too many of its punches. There is even an air of the running dog. If Betty Kenward (*Jennifer's Diary*) is identified as the enemy, Princess Margaret emerges as an unlikely heroine.

Was *Tatler*'s editor. *Tatler* now belongs to Condé Nast, and Tina Brown belongs once more to herself. Or so she would have us believe. What is inadmissible is that *Tatler* may just have been, *pro tem*, good for her career. Careerism is the new taboo. What the outcome will be is unpredictable. The best thing about her writing is its descriptive energy, her descriptions of objects as much as of their owners. She could do worse than study Zola. □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JOURNALISM
Barbara Hardy

Gilded cage

Bartleby in Manhattan and Other Essays
ELIZABETH HARDWICK *Weidenfeld* £8.95

Arnold Bennett said that writing had its own temptations. These exist in an extreme form for journalists, hard pressed by time and space, and accepting a professional invitation to persuade or ingratiate. Since their readers respond to similar conditions of speed and occasion, the defects of occasional writing are mostly decently buried in contemporaneity. Disinterment is a risky business and the blurb for Elizabeth Hardwick's collection of pieces written over 20 years blazons its challenge to judgment: 'criticism at its best, and something more than criticism.'

A professor at Columbia and a much praised essayist and novelist, she writes here as the generalising culture critic, responding to such subjects as Civil Rights; the assassination of Kennedy and the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald; Billy Graham; American and European fiction; Tolstoy's widow and Stalin's daughter. The *New York Review of Books* for which many of these pieces were written, and of which she is an advisory editor, indulges its contributors with lavish space. Elizabeth Hardwick uses it broodingly, lyrically, elaborately, not often analytically or argumentatively.

It wouldn't be accurate or fair to call the result bland. She writes about poverty, social injustice, violence, political apathy, and the decay of values with compassion, melancholy, anger and tenderness. But the characteristic stance is that of the spectator, observant, moved, sensitive even to the distortions and emptiness of the racist and the mugger, affected by the apolitical responses of nostalgia and despair. Politics are the stuff of lyric, politicians and social types are literary characters, public events are images and scenes. She is acutely aware of the inhumanity and danger of distance, warning us against the transformation of actuality into drama, yet falls into a complicity with aesthetic reaction, trapped by her gifts of style and observation.

Hers is a form of liberal conservatism. There is no suggestion, for instance, that the revolutions and liberations of the 1960s brought gains, as well as losses, except in her discussions of the Civil Rights movement, which she energetically represents in its decency, simplicity and unsophisticated communal virtue. But the ambitions of the young, and of the women, are mostly seen as losses, not gains, as she looks back in nostalgia to lost stabilities and strengths. Her judgments are elusive, sometimes too isolated to criticise satisfactorily, as when she laments 'the union of licence and literary conventionality' in many current women writers.

Other instances, and other implications, of women's art are unconsidered. She laments the instabilities of modern marriage in a jeremiad called 'Domestic Manners', where she again deplores the licentiousness of women's fiction and is depressed by 'the sexual information business'. Restrictions and dishonesties of the old forms and fictions are unmentioned; change is loss. The honourable attempt to question life's shapes, in the fiction of Pynchon, for instance, is recognised, but without pleasure. She is happier reading *Dead Souls*: another instance of a questionable nostalgia. Gogol must have become easier to read as history moves on. There is plenty of wry irony in these essays, but little of the humour needed to accompany disgust and sadness. No one would think, from reading the account of Warhol's and Morrissey's film *Trash*, for instance, that it was possible to find it funny as well as hideous.

Her literary criticism is impressionistic and imagistic and often takes the form of an incantatory recall or paraphrase, as in the title-essay on Hawthorne, or the review of a French production of *Timon*. As with much of the social comment, the judgments are so isolated and asserted that it is hard to get a proper evaluative grip on their implications. Sometimes she says things which seem so obviously wrong that one thinks a qualification or an explanation has got lost.

She says that Thomas Hardy's Jude 'is not gifted enough for the life of scholarship and learning his heart is set upon', that the characters in the novel are 'modest persons who have asked only the lightest measure of possibility' and that 'every single character fails and falls, in great pain, each one'. These statements strike me not only as inaccuracies, but as failures to see the point and method of the novel she so much admires. She writes with great sensitivity about Sue Bridehead, yet remarks 'it is curious that Hardy should have chosen this name'. In a thoroughly visualised recall of a French production of *Timon* she shows a sharp sense of such nuances as 'the veiled and difficult reticences of the interesting host', but can conclude, 'Humanity has not harmed Timon. The ingratitude was local, limited, and we had not expected him to keep such a deep accounting or to extend his demands so widely.' Not criticism at its best.

The writing is fine writing, the genre *belles-lettres*. Description is prolonged, conceits often gratuitous. She seldom trusts a noun to appear without the escort of one or more adjectives. There is brightness and individuality in the prose, but its excesses make for distraction rather than concentration. This is especially true of essays dealing with austerities, like those of *Timon* or of Simone Weil, where the charms and graces of language draw an undesirable and inappropriate attention to themselves. Some of these qualities may have passed unnoticed on a quick reading of a magazine review, but now they are offered to a scrutiny for which they may not have been designed. □

FALLS THE SHADOW

'As a political thriller **Falls the Shadow** is brilliantly paced, a most compelling tale. But what gives it distinction is the passion with which it is written and the important moral issues it raises.' **Daily Telegraph**

'The novel succeeds in its true intention: to remind Israel in its time of crisis that if it loses its moral values it will lose everything worthwhile... excellent' **Financial Times**

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DIARIES
Michael Heffernan

Anxiety state

Peter Hall's Diaries
ed. JOHN GOODWIN *Hamish Hamilton* £12.95

Five years ago Harold Pinter told a publicity man, 'My friendship with Peter is of no concern to anyone except Peter and me. As for our working relationship, it's in our work; it's there to see.' With the publication of Hall's diaries (where this remark is recorded) that sentiment seems to have evaporated, and Pinter has gone public in a *New Standard* interview declaring that Hall has betrayed confidences about his private life. Other attacks on the publication include a massive indictment by John Osborne of 'the perpetrator of this chronicle of our dull and overweaning times'.

On first sight, the diaries are not what one would expect from the country's most powerful (and many believe most talented) theatrical figure since the War. There are few serious insights, no wit, precious little humour and, most disappointing, no idiosyncratic portraits of the leading performers who seem to sleep-walk across these pages, stopping only to utter some gentle words of encouragement to their harassed author. Yet the book is hard to put aside. Hall makes recurring references to his paranoid tendencies, and it may be these which get him up early in the morning, no matter how late the dinner or technical rehearsal may have ended. The diaries were dictated at 6 a.m., often at the beginning of a 16-hour working day. Hall's energy, which finds expression in the narrow but intense emotions of the diary, is seductive in itself. He also rejoices in a paranoid's sharp insight, as when he goes up to make a speech on Olivier's last night at the Old Vic:

> I sneaked in behind and tapped him on the shoulder. He turned and looked at me horrified. For about a hundredth of a second I saw the natural reaction: 'What are *you* doing here? Get off the bloody stage.' It was then replaced by the actor's mask, looking surprised, amazed.

Hall's is by nature a calculating spirit. 'I am going to have to be very careful of the drama panel.' 'I'm sure there's going to be a big press attack from somebody within the next ten days . . . Someone will come out of the woodwork. Perhaps Jonathan Miller.' The dullness of so many of the entries soon appears the cover for a mood of intense suspicion, the mild manner of the tributes and reproofs he doles out a mask for hostility and envy.

By coincidence, Hall found himself on the day he first talked with Peter Shaffer about *Amadeus* finishing Robert Gittings's life of Hardy. 'How intriguing it is', Hall comments, 'that the humanity of an artist's work is no guarantee that he is a decent human being.' The artist possesses 'a ruthless tendency to cannibalise his life and the people around him for his work' – a sentiment which reverberates when Hall describes Angela Lansbury's difficulty, at the time of her mother's death, in rehearsing Gertrude:

> Her grief was too much. An extraordinary moment. Everyone in the cast felt the reality of death – and the second half of Hamlet particularly is about death. I have a feeling there is something wonderful in this production, if only I can bring it home.

Hall is a great director, however mean-spirited a diarist; and such moments, when actor, character, director and play lose their distinct existences might, for all their amorality, be essential to the creation of art. But is it not the ideal that they should be capable of separating out again enriched and not merely eaten up?

It is a pity, though perhaps not accidental, that Hall says so little about the process of directing, outside of some intelligent insights into the plays themselves. There are a few occasions of intense creative excitement, but, for the most part, the crucial words are 'success' and 'failure'. A play goes well in rehearsal, then suddenly he sees the possibility it will go badly in the press, a horrible feeling which, as director, he must hide from the cast. There is no need to doubt the many warm compliments paid to him by actors. As he insists, a director's best qualities are those he doesn't think about: one of his is the strength to contain the anxiety of the company.

But what of his own anxiety? So many of Hall's references to his own productions ring cold and distant. Of a New York flop in 1972 he writes, 'it is dying, as shows can', in a passage which reads as though the production were quite cut off from its director. Such a defensive posture might be necessary for morale, but in Hall it seems more profound and persistent, as if he has great trouble staying in touch with his own work. This may explain his greed for work, his reluctance to say no or to see any conflict between the claims of opera, advertising, television compering and acting jobs and those of the National Theatre.

In line with this theme is that aspect of the diaries which has most incensed Hall's regular critics – his efforts to distance himself from his own power. He will always, he complains, be accused of power-seeking. He doesn't want power: he wants to achieve something. The reality, however, is that Hall *is* a powerful man and his diary overflows with efforts to preserve and extend his power. By and large, he has attracted less talent to the National than he has driven away. If he wants to stand apart from power, to play the victim, the thought must arise that he wants to stand apart from his responsibility.

In his introduction Hall regrets that he kept no detailed record of day-to-day events during his time at the RSC. In that period, when the country's dramatic life was richer and more confident than it is now, would the young, brilliant director have been so frightened and so miserable? □

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FICTION
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Dark doings

Sole Survivor
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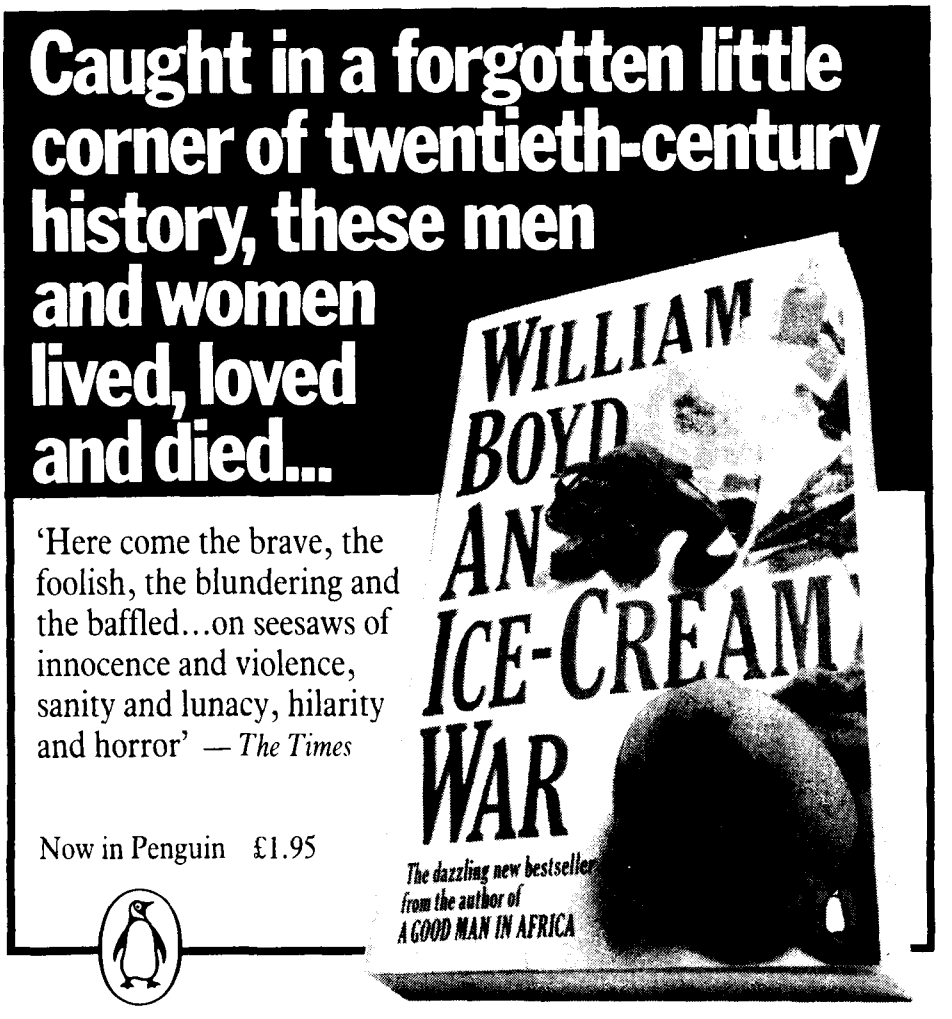
GLEN TOMASETTI *Harvester* £8.95

Sole Survivor, the final novel in the prize-winning Plumb trilogy, is the story of Raymond Sole and his cousin Duggie, a politician dirty enough to delight Jill Tweedie, a man who 'could use the masonic grip while crossing himself and not be diminished'. Raymond, son of Meg and grandson of the once reverend George, is a political journalist. His shared childhood with Duggie is a danger which Duggie overlooks: 'Because he was fond of me he could not believe I had any substance . . . almost by accident I became indispensable to him.' Here are the seeds of another brilliant novel. Gee's New Zealanders are all greys, rather than All Blacks – for Raymond is ruthless, too. He and Duggie have watched (allowed?) others to die. Outstanding on its own, this story is considerably enriched by the past explored in previous Plumb books. Characters with this much history and development gather their own momentum, creating, as they do so, a picture of the Human Race as circuit not progression. In this trilogy, Gee spans almost a century of New Zealand's history and touches on many a universal truth. Sole, as the title implies, is essentially a survivor, and the book, the Plumb story, ends on an optimistic if poignant note. Gee is surely one of the richest writers around. His strength, like Cleopatra's, is his infinite variety, and he, too, makes hungry where most he satisfies.

Kate's House is a dolls' house, created as a child's view of the world is, snatched from overheard conversations, nursery rhymes, stories – not the 'nice' house her mother envisaged, but a seedy bedsitter for a princess, squatters and a witch. As Kate plays god with her dolls, so the action is mirrored to hilarious and gruesome effect in a rooming house in London's W11. God moves in mysterious ways; Kate is arbitrary and easily bored. The mummy will have a baby (Marjorie MacDonald expects The Second Coming); the dog will help the witch to light the fire (Pearl's dog Billy is puzzling the vet); the princess will be invited to the Royal Wedding, the baby will lose an arm . . . Such whims create havoc in Notting Hill, but are understandable in the context of Kate's own subjugation to her parents, who love her but leave her for weeks with the irresponsible and sulky Suzy, an anxious time relieved only by frequent trips to MacDonalds where 'what she liked was the bright red colour, the shiny formica tables and the general ambience given by tomato sauce combined with an outing'. Ms Waugh has a rare wit and, although the novel is limited by one's appetite for black fantasy, the character of Kate, a delicious mixture of innocence, self-interest, bad taste and a healthy disregard for her trendy parents, is a real treat.

The Woman in Black is a ghost story: young Kipps is sent from London to the wilds of Crythin Gifford, and beyond, to sort out the late Mrs Drablow's papers. Mention of Mrs D. is enough to turn the colour of the healthiest cheek to a sickly grey, lips are sealed, glances exchanged, the natives are already 'broken' with fear. The action stems from Eel Marsh house, a memorably spooky creation, gaunt, remote, approached with trepidation across Nine Lives Causeway, cut off now by the tide, now by a swirling sea mist. Wind rattles the proverbial casement, a child howls, something very nasty lurks in the desolate graveyard . . . For sceptics, all this is only marginally more upsetting than a cup of Horlicks before bed, but Susan Hill has been admirably faithful to the conventions of the genre and this, plus John Lawrence's illustrations – all Piper-black skies and wheeling gulls – bring Kipps inexorably 'to the very edge of the horizon where life and death meet together'.

Man of Letters, forebodingly described as a 'timely' book, is a Battle of the Sexes novel, a genre with which, to judge from others mentioned on the back cover, Harvester are already punch drunk. Sir Dorton Serry, philosopher, academic, committee man, father, husband, Australian (that order), uses women like other men use Kleenex. In love with love, he pursues women 'with ardour and caution, by letter'. In late middle-age his quest becomes to find the perfect woman to act as midwife to the great work (liberated woman seeks perfect man as father for her baby?) but finds, oh horror and drat! that the world, that women, have changed. His cry is not 'Why can't a woman be more like a man!' but why can't the new woman be more like the old? Glen Tomasetti, a woman who sounds like a man, rips the iron fist from the velvet glove and puts Serry in the ring where he goes a few rounds and comes out reeling. The novel is intelligently argued and better than some in that, although the feminist version of the Geneva Convention rarely allows it, laughing gas is used here and there to good effect. Serry deserves a bonk on the nose, if not below the belt, but Tomasetti's message is surely rather naïve: if the new woman is now to revenge her lot by using the old man, where oh where is progress? □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VINCENT BUCKLEY is Professor of English at Melbourne University. His *Selected Poems* were published by Angus & Robertson in 1981.

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THEATRE
Paul Allen

Passing the baton

Maydays
DAVID EDGAR *Barbican*
The Cherry Orchard
ANTON CHEKHOV *Haymarket*
True Dare Kiss
DEBBIE HORSFIELD *Liverpool Playhouse Studio*
The Relapse
JOHN VANBRUGH *Lyric, Hammersmith*

According to the *Observer*, David Edgar's new play is about not politics but politicking, and politicking has no more automatic right to exposure in the theatre than stamp-collecting. I know I am naive (something still rustles up and down my spine when I hear the *Internationale* sung beautifully or even badly at a play's opening) but I thought the feminists had done enough to show even those who hadn't spotted it before that politics and politicking were each part of the other.

Maydays may be too coolly ironic, too elegantly analytical, too self-consciously structured for its own good. But it is not unimportant, and in two scenes near the beginning and end I think we can see Edgar, fresh from his collaboration with Charles Dickens, learning with RSC backing to handle not just the scale but the breath-taking complexity of the true epic; and it is that complexity, set against the realisation that politics is the one 'science' that still believes an analysis can be absolutely and objectively correct, which forms the core of the play.

Maydays starts in 1945 with a passionate affirmation of revolution as not only inevitable and ideologically desirable but fun. It ends in the early Eighties with the man who made that speech recruiting for the hard right. The plot, enough for a thick novel which is not always an advantage, has two more strands linked to personal journeys: that of a public schoolboy who turns to Trotskyism and slides all the way back via 'quality' journalism, and that of a Russian soldier, dissident and eventually exile.

In addition to the narrative structure Edgar goes in for a system of using familiar phrases and ideas in the way well-organised music will occasionally drop in a phrase or chord sequence to pay off a development. Lenin's remark that 'a revolution is a festival' is cleverly used first to exhilarate and then to depress; Trotsky's reference to 'human dust' becomes more chilling each time it becomes more personal, and it gets harder to find anyone who has sustained a belief in individual freedom and rights; Kronstadt and Red Barcelona recall Communist atrocities and become emblems of disillusion regularly repeated.

The linguistic echoes can be used more domestically too. Glass (the journalist, played by Antony Sher) finds his career running in jumpy parallel with that of his old teacher Crowther, the ex-Communist of the opening scene (John Shrapnel). Never quite in step but going the same way they bandy phrases back at each other like a married couple remembering too much.

Unfortunately Edgar has so much plot to get in that he has to resort continually to the long, measured speech which, obligingly, nobody interrupts. Verbal smartness, gags about the barmy sectarianism, party newspapers, the chronic inability actually to organise anything, all lighten the narrative but leave it somehow literary and earth-bound. And in the long central sections there are too few surprises in the perceptions: I agree that Crowther might get finally turned off because his students split their infinitives and spell fascism with an 'h' and thus undervalue his standards and by extension himself, but I am not overwhelmed at the news.

What is more encouraging is Edgar's vision of socialism as a kind of baton being passed on in a relay race. It doesn't matter if runners fall by the wayside or join another team if somebody else takes over. If his view that the current runners are the feminists is contentious because liberation – freedom – is not a synonym for socialism, well, the point he is trying to make is precisely that it ought to be.

But what lifts the whole play into a richer and headier dimension is the 'Russian' strand to the story, and those two scenes. We have barely settled in our seats when we meet Lermontov interrogating rebel Hungarians in 1956. In a scene bristling with dramatic activity (and 13 people on stage) he gets a graphic lesson in Communism from a prisoner he decides to release. The prisoner takes a grenade, uses it to sear the body of a Russian soldier, and Lermontov's response is to shoot his next prisoner, a racist counter-revolutionary. All the issues whirl in the air (Lermontov has also insulted his ill-educated woman stenographer) in a scene lasting perhaps 15 minutes.

Lermontov (seated) en route to dissidence

The pay-off comes when Lermontov, almost broken by years in the camps having rashly spoken up for the right to demonstrate, comes as an exile to Britain. Now a figure of awkward, shambling grandeur in Bob Peck's magnetic performance, he is asked to accept an award from the 'Committee in Defence of Liberty'. At the high table are the Hungarian he released 25 years before, an American we heard ten years or more earlier movingly defend the agony of liberalism, the journalist Glass, the academic Crowther, a Tory Prime Minister in waiting. As he listens to the speeches and reads the notes written for him Lermontov makes the connection between Eastern totalitarianism and Western authoritarianism, and spots the way freedom has become a concept cynically annexed for the purpose of embarrassing opponents; one side's crank is the other's dissident. 'Of course it's not the same in your country as mine', he tells his audience – us – because, 'you don't look like jailers. But you look like the kind of people who might pay jailers.'

It is no accident that Lermontov is so much more impressive than Edgar's other characters. Nothing is certain around him, least of all the language. He struggles for words which dry up or come out in shooting streams. Everybody else in Edgar's writing and Ron Daniels's production has the fluency of the kind of river you sit beside while thinking of something else. *Maydays* includes too much and still misses things out (the bulk of the voters on either side for a start) but it is still the richest and most expansive play we have had about the difficulty of idealistic revolutionary socialism.

LINDSAY ANDERSON'S production of **The Cherry Orchard** is surprisingly free of pain and, consequently, of comedy too. The funniest thing in it is Bill Fraser as Pischchik, the great carthorse of an old aristocrat, blowing, stamping, begging, almost groping, and alone genuinely upset at the destruction not of the old order (he doesn't realise) but the departure of his friends. He plays it as if it were Ayckbourn, which is exactly right.

It is a starry cast: Frank Finlay acts his socks off as Lopakhin; Joan Plowright smiles and flutters as Madame Ranyevsky; Leslie Phillips is better than you might expect as Gayev, and Bernard Miles is only hammy at the very last as the ancient Firs. There is much to enjoy from Frank Grimes as the eternal student, Trofimov, but in general the evening is merely a well-laid-out anodyne for the West End.

Debbie Horsfield is a writer to watch. **True Dare Kiss** is her second look at the lives of four women first seen in *The Red Devils* where they were Manchester United fans coping with defeat in the Cup Final and wider disappointments. Now wedges have been driven between them by education for Phil, business success for Nita, marriage for Alice and a sort of jobless slaggery for Beth.

The author is on weaker ground, and resorts to old gags, when she writes outside the native milieu of the four, but within it

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she is funny, challenging and sharp and has the courage to let the characters lead. A second sequel is due at the adventurous Liverpool Playhouse Studio later, and the rich opportunities in following relationships through on this scale are worth exploring.

William Gaskill's return to Restoration comedy with **The Relapse** is notable for three things. One is the extraordinary performance of Simon Callow as Lord Foppington. The voice starts somewhere between Donald Sinden and Prince Charles, squeaking and swooping and mangling all vowels: 'I rise abort tin o'clack', he confides. Another is a commitment to racially integrated casting which pays off handsomely with Dona Croll's Berinthia and much less so with Marsha Millar's Hoyden who seemed to be in another production because her technique is so different. And the third is that this intermittently funny play with its uncompromising enthusiasm for sex in and out of wedlock is made to seem merely sluggish. □

DESIGN
Jules Lubbock

What's needed

Design and the Economy
Design Council until 5 November

'I think that's too product for me.' One can just hear Michael Edwardes's South African accent rasping his reply to a suggestion of Terry Coleman that British Leyland consider introducing automatic gear-change. Imagine Alfred P. Sloane, the architect of General Motors and the innovator of car-styling and the integrated model range, saying such a thing! According to an absolutely brilliant report by three economists which accompanies this exhibition, the failure of British managers to design products that their customers want is a major neglected factor in the demise of industry.*

The starting point of the report is the drop in Britain's share of world trade in manufactures from 20 per cent to 10 per cent between 1955 and 1981, and the rise in the proportion of imported goods on the home market from six per cent to almost 30 per cent over the same period. Worse still, the rate of increase of this import penetration has accelerated sixfold from 0.3 per cent a year to 1.75 per cent, and shows no sign of diminishing. At this rate 40 per cent import penetration will be attained before the next election. Whole industries have disappeared. 95 per cent of all cutlery is now imported. The machine-tool industry is on its knees. The furniture industry, not helped by Terence Conran's policy of having Habitat's merchandise made abroad (unlike Marks and Spencer), has lost 20,000 jobs in recent years.

Most economists account for this in terms of macro-economic factors such as prices, wages and exchange rates, or they blame labour problems which make it impossible 'for management to manage'. This report concentrates upon the design of a product, which is totally the responsibility of management. It points out that European industries cannot hope to compete with newly developing countries in price. However, in the case of many products, price accounts for only a quarter of the reasons which influence a customer to buy (in the case of machine tools only one-twentieth) whereas the quality of the product counts for more than half.

The answer does not lie in a rush to develop the newest technology (and this is their most important point) but in concentrating upon what the user needs, in scrupulous monitoring of the customer's response to a product after it has been launched, in a continuous programme of incremental improvements, and in innovation based upon feedback from the user. Our industrialists must be incremental tortoises rather than technological hares – and they must listen to their customers. The authors repeat the well-known statistic showing that research and development are overwhelmingly concentrated in the defence industries. But they also show the less well known corollary that virtually no money at all is spent upon the design and development of consumer goods.

Their remedy calls for a new style of management. Militaristic hierarchies are not the best solution to a free flow of ideas within a firm. Management must be open to participation from the shopfloor, along the lines suggested by the Lucas Combine. Designers must be given power, and be fully integrated in the framework of production, marketing and finance. Given the dyed-in-the-wool stupidity of the managers of most large companies it seems inconceivable that these ideas will be understood, let alone implemented.

But governments could help with a shift in the emphasis of economic policy from price and labour factors to design factors. To its credit the present government has made a start, yet absurdly the Department of Trade has no plans to distribute this report free to the managing directors of major companies (who are the worst offenders) or to politicians and trade unionists. The cost would be less than £20,000. Worse, not one political party, certainly not Labour, so much as mentioned the word 'design' in its manifesto policy for industrial regeneration. The Design Council also could do more to follow up its worthy initiative with exhibitions of particular products focussing upon case histories of unsuccessful British firms and successful foreign ones. Its Press Office could also improve its system of advance publicity.

The message of the report is this: turning swords into ploughshares is both peaceful and profitable; industrial democracy is the basis for successful modern manufacturing; and those designs are good which please the customer, not those that satisfy the designer. □

R. Rothwell, P. Gardiner & K. Schott, Design and the Economy, free from the Design Council.

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MUSIC
Andrew Clements

Ins and outs

The New Oxford Companion to Music
ed. DENIS ARNOLD *Oxford* two volumes £37.50 until 31 January 1984; £50 thereafter

The Oxford Companion to Music first appeared in 1938, written entirely by Percy Scholes. It ran to nine editions and many more reprints and must have educated and inspired several generations of musicians and concert-goers. How many, I wonder, took their mental images of the great composers from the drawings by Batt that decorated its pages – Beethoven in the debris of his study, ear trumpet to hand, Brahms brewing coffee, Elgar dreaming at his desk, a spaniel looking on in adoration – and how many more will have been teased or provoked by Scholes's idiosyncracies? Since the publication of the *New Grove* two years ago initiated a fresh vintage of music reference texts, the old *Companion* has come to seem a bit of a period piece, inextricably linked with the English organ-loft tradition and badly in need of wholesale revision and modernisation.

Oxford University Press decided to start again virtually from scratch. Only a handful of Scholes's original entries have been retained, though these include his irreplaceable essay on 'Odour and Music', and Denis

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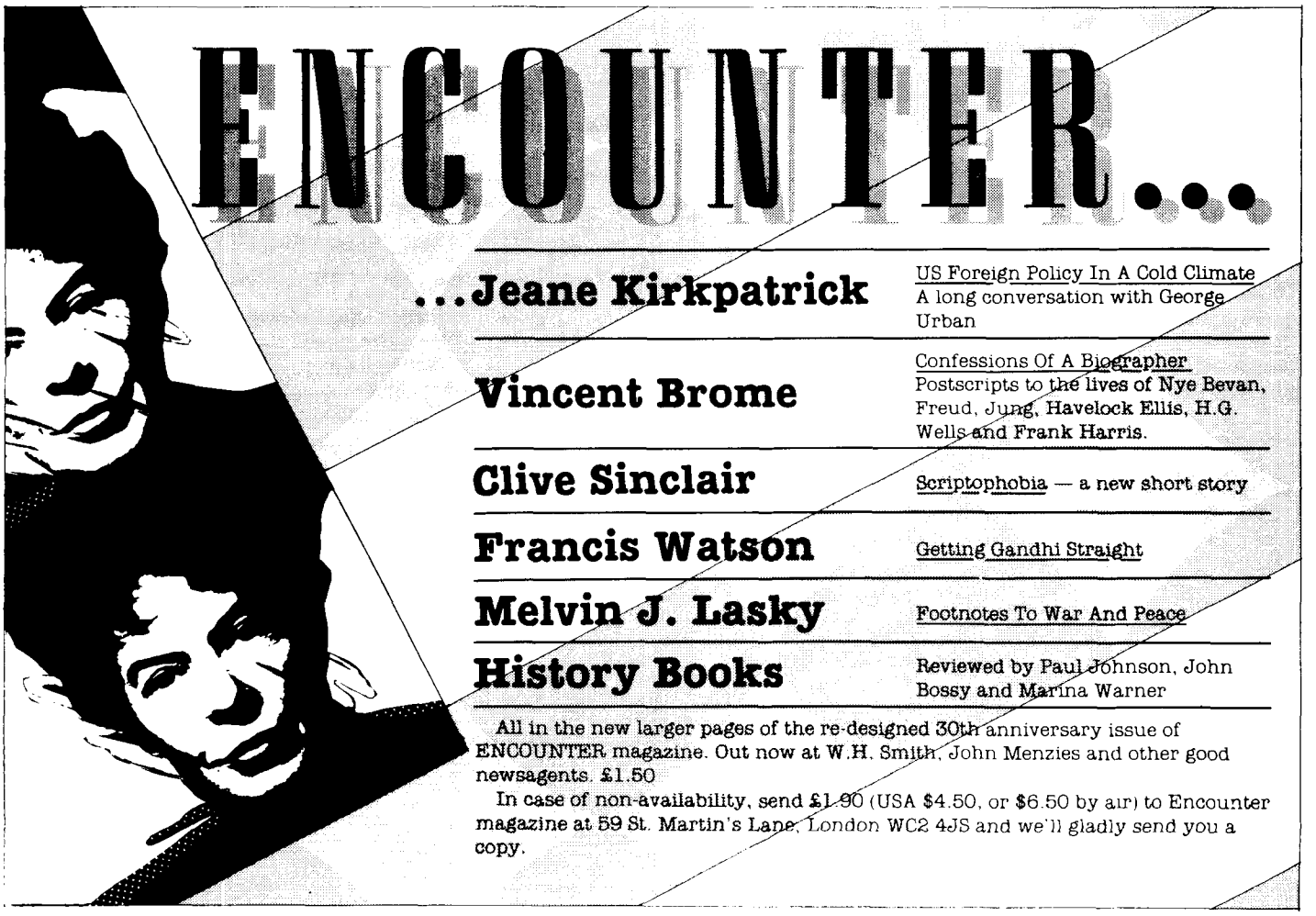
Arnold has called upon a wide range of contributors. The extent of musical knowledge is now deemed too great to be encompassed by a single author, and the hefty single-volume original has spread to two, equally hefty and generously endowed with in-text illustrations. The areas of growth are precisely those that swelled *New Grove* – the increase in the knowledge and performance of 'early' music, and the awareness that non-Western musical cultures should be represented. The entries on ethnomusicology are arguably the most successful and useful of all, providing pithy and readable accounts of many unfamiliar traditions, allowing one immediately to grasp their essentials in a way that the exhaustively detailed equivalents in *New Grove* perhaps do not. The pre-Baroque also seems thoroughly and straightforwardly covered, with academic learning worn lightly. Articles on the 'Greats' are more extensive than before, and a number of 20th-century figures have inevitably been elevated to that treatment. All those that I have read seem reasonable and uneccentric.

Yet the *New Companion* fails in at least one of its other objectives. It is in the nature of any work of reference to be out of date before it has been published. Educated guesses about composers' future reputations and development can be made, and a few of them are bound to be off target. But the 20th century does not seem to me to have been especially well served, and the fault is generally one of omission rather than error. Any reviewer of any reference book can pad his notice with lists of lacunae, but a single fact can serve to demonstrate the attitude to the present century shown here – 80 years of music are entrusted almost wholesale to a single contributor, chronologically equivalent to using one writer for everything from the heyday of Mozart to that of Wagner. In a volume born out of and committed to specialisms that seems a curious and parochial decision, however encyclopedic the knowledge he or she possesses. Paul Griffiths produces concise, readable entries, scrupulously researched, but they cannot help but reflect his own preferences – twice as much space given to Berio as to Nono and Xenakis combined (the Nono entry also tells us nothing of his work since 1970), cross references to almost everything of significance that Maxwell Davies has written, while Birtwistle's *Triumph of Time* goes unentered.

In such circumstances, some absences are inevitable, though still regrettable. Griffiths does not provide quite everything – Geoffrey Norris's 'Shostakovich' is splendidly authoritative, so that one forgives its three pages when Musorgsky has been rationed to less than half a page, and he provides similarly lucid accounts of other Russians. One would be inclined to overlook the omissions (apart from that of Schrecker) were it not for the risible and quite inexplicable inclusion of a number of New Zealand composers (their entries also *not* written by Griffiths) who, whatever their standing in their homelands, are more or less unknown here. When there is apparently no room for Gyorgy Kurtag, the most important Hungarian composer since Bartok, or for the leading Soviet Shnitke, or our own Nigel Osborne and Michael Finnissy, the position of John Rimmer and Ronald Tremain, worthy composers though they may be, seems uneasy, to say the least. Whatever criteria operated on the selection of contemporary composers, it should have been made clear in the preface. This is, after all, an important and respected source of reference with a wide circulation, and not just in New Zealand.

Another criterion for inclusion is made perfectly obvious. This is a companion to music – not musicians. You will search in vain for Furtwängler or Klemperer, Schnabel or Heifetz, though Kreisler and Joachim scrape in. It seems a pity not to have made the work that bit more comprehensive, though a line between historically important figures and also-rans would have to be drawn somewhere. *New Grove* apart, reliable references on performers are not easy to find; neither are sources on musicologists – in this case Schenker and Keller are out, though Georg Perle is in, presumably because he composes as well. A qualified welcome for the *New Companion* then, despite its high price for a general reference book. It lacks the charming eccentricities of its predecessor, but substitutes quirks of its own; a shame that some of these limit its usefulness. □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ART
John Spurling

Natural growth

Leonard McComb
Serpentine, until 20 November, then Oxford, Manchester, Brighton, Edinburgh
Anish Kapoor
Lisson, 66 Bell Street, London NW1
Sven Berlin
New Art Centre, 41 Sloane Street, London SW1

Leonard McComb has an engaging story about his close examination of a Turner watercolour in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. Hard as he looked he couldn't quite see how it was done, where the internal light came from. It was only when he was allowed to try on a pair of Turner's spectacles kept in a glass case nearby that he discovered the secret. The spectacles were powerful magnifiers and revealed a row of tiny white dots in the painting, invisible to the naked eye. The story reveals something about McComb himself: he is intensely and persistently inquisitive both about nature and about how other artists have translated it into art. A set of his *pensées* is laid out rather pretentiously in the catalogue, as if he were some kind of guru, but the *pensées* themselves are modest and accurate enough: 'Nature is full of unbelievable surprises – the fingerprint' or 'It is the vision that matters and not the ideas'.

Until 1977 McComb was a full-time teacher in art-schools, though quite unknown as an artist until 1976 when R. B. Kitaj included several of his drawings in 'The Human Clay' exhibition at the Hayward. A year later, at the age of 47, McComb won the Jubilee Prize at the RA Summer Show and at once entered the ranks of British Art's minor celebrities. Although his work has appeared regularly in group exhibitions since then, this is his first substantial one-man show.

His drawings and watercolours, once seen, are unmistakeable: portraits, nudes, still-lifes and occasionally townscapes done in innumerable, pale, cobwebby lines, as if one were seeing nature's fingerprints – all the layers of growth that add up to an apparently smooth surface – or the atmospheric vibrations set off by a single movement. His purpose – to equate the growth of a picture with the natural growth it records – seems reminiscent of Auerbach's, whose images are built out of layer upon layer of thick paint, except that McComb's images are entirely flat, the layers laid out side by side in two dimensions, and he often emphasises their two-dimensionality by posing his still-life or figure against some man-made decorative element, such as a piece of flower-patterned curtain or a Turkish carpet. Yet in spite of their flatness, their pallid colours and the elaborate, even fussy profusion of their lines, the best of these drawings achieve a monumental effect. McComb, one might say, demonstrates how the blade of grass lifts the paving-stone.

The pity is that in the later work – done in the last three years or so – he seems to have started to think first of lifting the paving-stone and only afterwards remembered to put in the blade of grass. The large figures – mostly nudes – from 1980-1 are like machine enlargements of classic McCombs: the cobwebby marks are there, but not the intense curiosity and perseverance that spun them from a single thread; and with two recent and enormous drawings of a rock and sea in Anglesey, he seems to be deliberately reaching out for the kind of vacuous, wall-size knitting which impresses contemporary museum curators and to which his own earlier work was such a quiet but firm reproach.

Anish Kapoor is one of the new sculptors promoted by the Lisson Gallery and his exotic objects have percolated all over Europe during the last two years and will be shown next month at the Sao Paulo Biennale. Casually attached to walls or dropped, as it were, on the floor, these objects are thickly coated with a dry, matt pigment, generally of one colour, so that their weight, texture and original nature are concealed. They might be made of iron, stone or papier-maché, just as they suggest, with almost equal insistence or lack of it, vegetal forms such as bananas, gourds or segments of coconut husk, human artefacts such as baskets, turbans or water-pots, and objects of some obscure religious significance. They have distinctly sexual associations, but then again they could just as well be a send-up of the West's phoney notions of the mysterious East.

The Lisson Gallery handout takes them with unsmiling seriousness but I doubt if that is the secret of their international success. They are more like glorified executive toys: suggestive, puzzling, cool, glossy, topics for conversation in 16 languages, but ultimately meaningless, except in so far as they imply, with economy and humour, that such a world as ours may be very likely read spirituality into a bunch of ossified bananas painted with gold leaf.

The New Art Centre, pursuing its long-term exploration of the St Ives School, has now fished up one of its least remembered survivors, Sven Berlin – half Swedish, but born and educated in England. On the evidence of this selection of his drawings and sculptures from the Forties, Berlin was rather more inclined towards dawn-of-history subject-matter – savage animals, predatory birds and Norsish human heads – than the abstract landscape associated with the School. His style, owing much to Gaudier-Brzeska, is somewhat uncertain, but there are one or two knotty, neo-primitive stone sculptures which would probably look still better glowering out of wet laurel bushes in some Irish Murdoch-style garden than in the spruce interior of a London gallery. A riposte, so to say, from the mysterious West. □

FILMS
John Coleman

Still life

Tokyo Story (U)
Gate, Notting Hill
The Colour of Pomegranates (U)
Camden Plaza
Spetters (18)
Classics, Chelsea and Tottenham Court Road
Little Ida (PG)
Minema
Spacehunter (PG)
Classics, Shaftesbury Avenue etc
The Black Stallion Returns (U)
Odeon, Marble Arch

Nothing so becomes a duff week as the revival of one of Yasujiro Ozu's masterpieces, his 1953 **Tokyo Story**, made ten years before his death during the great last flowering of this contemplative genius of cinema. 'Finished. 103 days; 43 bottles of sake,' reads the diary entry of his lifelong friend, Kogo Noda, script collaborator on some half of his 54 films; and Noda was simply recording the end of their boozy, fruitful writing labours: the occasion had still to be enacted and photographed. In this respect alone, one finds echoes of Hitchcock. There is also the testimony of Chishu Ryu, the aged father in *Tokyo Story* and a founder-member of Ozu's reportory company: 'He never changed the scenario after we went on the set. The words were so polished up that he would not allow us even a single mistake.' Ozu was notoriously exigent with his actors. And contemporary audiences, used to busy camera movements and spoon-fed pabulum, may find him equally demanding. Flatteringly, he expects an alertness of participation.

Family matters were his preoccupation and, specifically, the attempts of different generations to come to terms with one another. Here, an old couple, living in a small harbour town with their youngest daughter, go on a visit to Tokyo. First they stay with their married son; he's busy, his kids resent being displaced to make room for the visitors, those courteous Japanese smiles begin to waver. The camera steadily squats about three feet above the floor, registering – with a sort of ironic placidity – the little stage-sets that are domestic interiors, the formality of manners (bows, polite grins, self-effacing grunts) that overlays inner turmoils of pain, chagrin, disappointment. Shige, their querulous married daughter, runs a beauty shop and is likewise at a loss what to do with them. Shunted off to a neighbouring spa at their children's expense, the senior citizens (marvellously embodied in Chiyeko Higashiyama's beaming, perplexed corpulence, Ryu's skinny dignity topped by a faintly absurd hat) revolt against their noisy hotel and return too soon. Unexpected, they have to make shift for the night: the mother finds a

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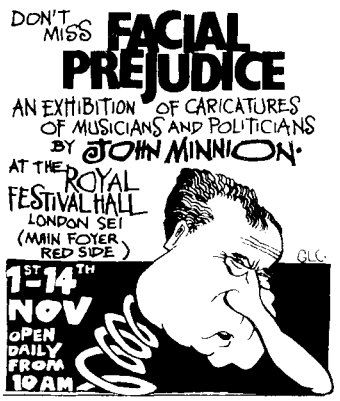

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bed and the happiest time of her trip with Noriko (Setsuko Hara), her widowed daughter-in-law and the film's compassionate core; the father meets old cronies and gets stinking drunk, turning up at Shige's in the small hours. Next day, they leave for home. En route, the mother is taken ill and dies soon after, surrounded by her hastily summoned children.

Ozu's habit of offering little series of establishing shots – factory chimneys, trains, street signs – acts as an extraordinary kind of moral punctuation. These 'still-lifes' (and he further allows us to dwell on rooms after they have been vacated) are artful, not arty, compositions; they bear witness to a world persisting without the people of the story, adding a barely endurable dimension of wistfulness. But, like everything else in an Ozu film, this wistfulness is essentially well-founded and realistic. It's the sweet-natured Noriko who, after all, refuses to palliate matters. 'Isn't life disappointing?' asks the youngest daughter near the close. 'Yes', she says gravely, 'it is.' Yet the cumulative effect is undismal, even tonic. Old Ryu comes in from the garden right after his wife's death, elated by a fine dawn, and there has been splendid comedy in the understated dryness of the lost, stoical couple's comments on their progeny during the ill-fated trip. Even the Japanese sense Ozu as being a quite particularly Japanese director; but, as so often where the true, high creative impulse is at work, his very adherence to what he knows lends his insights a universal directness and profundity. Only connect . . .

Sergo Paradjanov's **The Colour of Pomegranates,** which I wrote about at some length last year when it popped up in a muddy 16mm print at the ICA, has had as chequered a history as its persecuted Armenian director. This elliptical event, tracing hieratic moments in the odd career of a famed 17th-century troubadour, may now be seen in its 35mm proper glory, those emblematic pomegranates bleeding their rich, intended hues. It's the officially approved Soviet version of this 1969 'masterpiece', however, cut by veteran Sergei Yutkevitch to 73 minutes, that we get; and honesty forbids me from recording more than a bemused sense of something visually striking but meaningfully inaccessible.

Summary justice: Paul Verhoeven's **Spetters** (subtitled at the cinemas above but dubbed elsewhere) wears its Dutch cap at a rakish, box-office slant, glaring at the mixed fortunes of a trio of village lads, having *Graffiti*-style adventures in and around swinging Rotterdam (moto-cross, gang-bang buggery, instant religion): an unholy mix. Laila Mikkelsen's **Little Ida** is a well-intended pictorialisation of a novel about a small girl whose mother fraternises with a German officer in occupied Norway, '44-'45: irreproachable and unrecommendable. **Spacehunter,** Lamont Johnson directing junkyard derring-do on a plagued planet, went on too foggily behind my 3-D specs for informed comment. **The Black Stallion Returns,** alas, galloping off in all directions under another hand, spoiling the memory of Carroll Ballard's excellent first feature. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Warmed up

AS SOON as you see the luminous blue background you know the comedian isn't in a situation comedy of his own and is hoping to be part of yours. The door-to-door, stand-up-and-beg-type comic is like a jack-in-the-box. Press 'on' and there he is with his blue background and his audience reaction, wild-eyed and bushy-haired with adrenalin shock. It's like being phoned from America. They're six hours behind us over there and always seem to be either over-excited or suicidal. The laughter you hear on the soundtrack is no ordinary laughter, of course. It is the work of the 'Warm-up Man', a terrifying creature in bow-tie and toupé, whose job is to make people go 'ha ha ha' when they feel like going 'boo hoo hoo'. His function is that of 'The Tickler', the old stallion they keep on studs to get the mares worked up ready for the visit of Shergah or Bob Monkhouse or whoever happens to be passing through your living room that evening.

'When we come on air', Jasper Carrott tells the audience for **Carrott's Lib** (BBC-1), 'I want a big laugh without my doing a joke so everyone thinks they've missed something.' Carrott is the house-trained version of Alexei Sayle. Instead of just standing there and being rude, he allows himself repeatable, written jokes like 'How many election promises have already bitten the dust, such as "Of course I'll marry you".' I liked his Vasectomy Club tie: snipped off at the bottom with a tight little knot. But much of what he does is just backwards thinking, as for crosswords, so that 'The Texas Cold Sore Massacre' is about a man from Dallas who infected 79 women with herpes. I know, I know, but it's the way he tells them that isn't funny.

'That Welsh rarebit smells good,' said someone on **The Paul Hogan Show** (C4). 'Welsh rarebit?' said Paul. 'I'm just trying to get me underpants dry.' If he'd been English he'd've said 'socks' and died. The myth of Australia as the Gents of World (it's actually California) is a gift for someone like Hogan, allowing him to satirise it just by being his own sweet-smelling self. We laugh at a country in which Scrabble disputes are settled by arm-wrestling matches (the word was 'cmontheblues') by pretending it isn't this one. Is Hogan being satirically untopical with his 'Jaws' send-up? 'The Great Australian Topless Bather' causes havoc on Bondi until Paul arrives with a harpoon gun fitted with a plunger. You had to laugh, but did you?

'Just when you thought it was safe to stay in . . .' said the *TV Times*, struggling to catch up with the Australians the following evening. **'It's Russ Abbot's Madhouse!'** (ITV) (blue background). Russ is certainly England's only challenge to the New Australian Joke. (You wear a handkerchief on your head and you tread in a cat mess.) Even his name seems to be trying for that Aussie ring. 'I went to the Doctor yesterday,' says an obese girlfriend. 'Did he say anything about your big bum?' 'No, your name wasn't mentioned.' Watching it, you wind up focussed on the writing sessions that could produce 'Don't forget to write.' 'Write?' 'Right.' 'When?' 'After you've left.' 'Left?' 'Right.' Isn't this the kind of thing we don't find funny about French humour? 'Excuse me, I think I've flooded the engine,' says a woman. 'Where 've you left it madam?' (Can you hear it coming?) 'In the canal!' At which point the show packed up and a corner of Ceefax appeared on the screen. 'It seems the whole programme has gone to the bottom of the canal', said the announcer shrewdly, making a quick bid for Russ's job, 'but no doubt "Barratt Homes" will get to the *bottom* of it.'

I suppose Russ Abbot's joke-writer Russell Lane gave most of his best stuff to the **Stanley Baxter Show** (C4), for which he also writes. I loved Baxter's Shanghai Awayday, in which his Marlene is stuck in the famous Express with George Formby singing 'Mr Woo's a taxidermist now'. 'I don't get it', says Marlene, 'where's the innuendo?' You can imagine what happens when Mr and Mrs McBaxter tell us that 'Scottish country dancing ("graceful, energetic and entirely pointless") occupies our thoughts from the moment we get up in the morning to the moment we go to bed.' But the best was his finely-observed Arthur Negus, assessing a 'pre-war village postmistress' valued at £750 until he rumbles the hollow left 'cabriolet' leg and calmly breaks it off.

Punchlines (ITV) (blue background) is a kind of joke-writing session made public, or 'pubic' as they would say. It involves mixing up jokes and punchlines and getting guests with names like 'Wine' and 'Dive' to put them together again by picking a number. The beauty of it is that the jokes don't have to be jokes in the first place, eg: 'An octopus has lots of suckers on its . . . SHUTTLECOCK'. Once you get the hang of it, the show is really a . . . LAVATORY SEAT!!

At the end of the evening you have to admire the studio audiences as much as the comedians. Amateurs mostly, they have to pick up the knack of mirthless laughter in the mere six or seven hours they spend sitting there without going to the lavatory or eating. Unfortunately for them, the Warm-up Man sometimes overdoes it with his electric cattle-prod and they get what is called a 'laughter priapus', howling helplessly at the efforts of the lighting engineer. This is what happened when Norman Fowler appeared on **Weekend World** (ITV) last Sunday. Strangely enough, the unnatural merriment helped Fowler get across the comic irony of his message that our hospitals are being closed down FOR OUR OWN GOOD! Intercut with the grind of traffic accidents and the death rattles of cancer victims, Fowler's was a memorable contribution to our 'Autumn of Humour'. □

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WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2794 **Set by P. Kay**

We're often told that Labour's problem is one of presentation rather than policy. To help the party out, let's have suggested extracts from the next manifesto on unilateral nuclear disarmament, the National Economic Assessment, the Common Agricultural Policy or Proportional Representation, containing only words of one syllable. Policies may be revised where political judgment coincides with linguistic necessity. Max 120 words by 11 November.

No 2791 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Opening paragraphs of novels constructed entirely of single lines from well-known poems.

Report **By Jeff Squiffy**

Thanks for all the bouquets which have been sent since last week's announcement of my unfortunate *contretemps* with a juggernaut. I could have done with fewer flowers and more fivers, but that's my problem. You've all been most kind, not least in submitting so many well-manicured entries for this intriguing little comp. Eight quid per winner, and, oh, the difference to you!

In the uncertain hour before the morning, he lifted his head from drinking, as cattle do, his eyes fixed upon nothing. He chucked up everything, rapidly backwards and forwards: we call this revealing what was much better hid, such gorging of beef, blood pudding and black bread, of herbs, and other country messes. Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon as this one was long finished with: it all comes to the same thing at the end – a burning forehead and a parching tongue.

We could have crossed the road, but hesitated.

WILL BELLENGER

After the Bomb

The intense atom glows like a cloud of fire that is so heavy now, at once far off and near. The first foe in the field who treads alone, tomorrow will be dying. Here, where men sit and hear each other groan and shut the gates of mercy on mankind, the lone and level sands stretch far away. Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide. Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find, through glasses of mortality, beauties that the earth has lost, the giants of the waste, yellow and black and pale and hectic red on the cold hillside.

CONNIE MAGER

It must have been a Friday. I could hear the peanut-munching crowd – the readers of the *Boston Evening Transcript* – walking down Bristol Street. In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht the man bent over his guitar. One hand rested on his rifle; the other hand held firmly the wrist of the red girl. The yellow woman started to bellow. It seemed quite safe till she got up and dressed. She left the web. She left the loom. The nylon gloves and jewellery substitutes were thickly clustered, one and all.

The rain came heavily and fell in floods.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

And how should I begin? I remember – I remember, it was a summer evening when we two parted. While I debated what to do, my heart was shaken with tears and horror. The difference to me? I was alone – alone, and palely loitering down to a sunless sea. At five o'clock in the morning, the reminiscence comes; and I shall die tomorrow, silently, and gay without frivolity. His mind was not on me. A favourite has no friend.

JIMMIE PEARSE

I shot the Albatross, and that has made all the difference. With silence and tears, we buried him darkly at dead of night. I swore – but was I sober when I swore? – he had softly and suddenly vanished away. I cried for madder music and for stronger wine, with beaded bubbles winking at the brim: 'My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.' My father and my mother look'd at each other with a wild surmise; and gracious! how Lord Lundy cried.

ANTHEA WEST

Yes, I remember Adlestrop – you would know him if you saw him for his eyes are sunken in. Just for a handful of silver he left us in the licorice fields at Pontefract, with a cargo of Tyne coal. Someone had blundered. I was weary and ill at ease. I thought, 'How paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!' He returned before the dawn with his shirt and tunic torn, a sadder and a wiser man. 'Is there anybody there?' he said. 'I am here at the gate alone.' But answer came there none.

KEN RUDGE

FIRST PERSON

Anne Smith

Mother's little helpers

A COUPLE OF weeks ago I saw the tail end of a programme about women addicted to tranquillisers and the hellish experience of giving them up. A doctor commented that this should be a warning to women not to use tranquillisers over any length of time. It seemed like a reasonable thing to say, until it occurred to me – who the blazes prescribes these things in the first place?

I challenged a retired doctor on this. She explained that people come to the receptionist to have their prescriptions renewed. The receptionist gathers a bundle of these requests and takes them to the doctor to sign. There may be a hundred at one time. The doctor doesn't bother to scrutinise them; she or he just signs, in great haste.

Roll on the day of computerised medicine! It's long overdue. Anyway, I rather fancy the idea of getting time to punch my symptoms into a computer at leisure. Doctors have so little time. The old doctor I spoke to said that a friend of hers, a hard-pressed NHS GP, once spent a long time on a difficult diagnosis. After 15 minutes, the walking wounded in the crowded waiting-room began to stamp their feet as one person (all but the gout and arthritis cases, that is). That night, the doctor wrote his resignation; within a couple of months, he had emigrated to America.

So, granted that a doctor's lot is not a happy one. There are members of my own family who feel that life is not complete unless they have visited the doctor at least once in a fortnight. And each of them tells me that, whenever they go, they find my uncle there already. He appears to be a permanent fixture of the waiting-room. We're not sure if he's ill or marking down future hosts to provide him with his greatest pleasure in life, funerals. If there is reincarnation, he will indubitably come back as a vulture. But he's an ex-miner with a dicky ticker and pneumoconiosis to complicate his terminal hypochondria, and he was always a cautious man – an accountant manqué, we believed – so it may be that he's sitting there just in case. It's cheaper than having the phone installed.

I have always had a sneaking suspicion that doctors have three basic remedies. That is, two more than the *Sunday Post* doctor (the *Sunday Post*, with its comic strips, is still the most popular newspaper in Scotland) used to have. For everything from catarrh to insanity, he prescribed Gregory's Powders. I think this was a genteel, circumspect way of telling you to blow it out your arse, since Gregory's Powders seem to have been primarily invented for the relief of flatulence.

Just as hairdressers have one style for short hair, one for medium and one for long, so doctors prescribe either tranquillisers, antibiotics, or vitamins. Cursed in my youth with a pale complexion, I finally gave up taking my troubles to my GP after he prescribed iron pills for a sprained ankle. It wasn't until I was hobbling up the road to the chemist's that it dawned on me, and, by then, it was too late.

Another GP in my home town has discovered the perfect technique to cope with patients with vague symptoms. He doesn't prescribe anything, he simply says, 'Oh, I know! I have the same thing myself and can't shake it off – it's awful.' They toddle away full of fellow-feeling and may even be inside the chemist's before they realise that he hasn't actually prescribed anything. Baffled, they retreat with a bottle of aspirins, which is probably what they should have taken in the first place.

The serious side of it is that we need many more doctors, and those doctors need computers. (Tell that to Mrs Thatcher, sez you.) Failing that, we need a body of professional listeners, highly trained sympathisers – preventive medicine's answer to the Victorian funeral mute, perhaps? And we need to look a lot harder at what makes women so ready to accept the hopelessness of their situation, and turn to drugs that don't even give them a high. □

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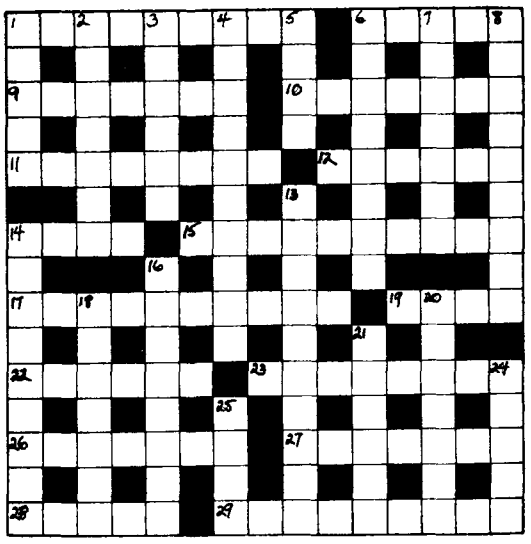
Weekend Crossword 1419

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1419, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 8 November.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

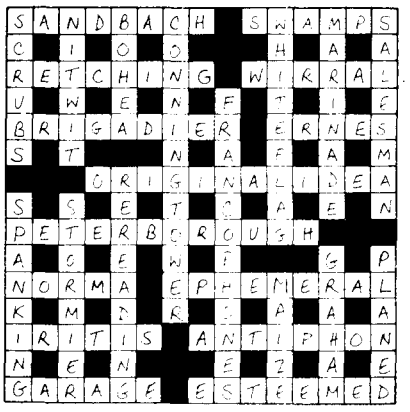
1. Stay close to a man in the dark (9)
6. Here to spend a morning on an animal (5)
9. Preserve a farewell in a piece of music (7)
10. Flavour which makes the foremost soldiers sick with the army leader (7)
11. Wildly cling as love is comforting (8)
12. The finder turns out to be an acquaintance (6)
14. Go by and not make a call (4)
15. The masculine element is criminal (10)
17. Londoners who have to finish during festivals (10)
19. Man who would be sacked if he embraced one (4)
22. Welcoming looks for Samuel (6)
23. Faithful wife makes a writer go off with her (8)
26. Music which puts a tired person into a bad temper (7)
27. It is a nice change holding nothing back for the slope (7)
28. Vegetable for a foreigner (5)
29. Outstanding feature of the tall but not heavy (9)

DOWN

1. Supports players (5)
2. State in which no more can be done (7)
3. Look for a stroke (6)
4. Companies of the line produced by groups of irregulars (10)
5. River bird (4)
6. It is not usual to modify a moral ban (8)
7. It can produce a solution from opening in sun (7)
8. Did not go straight, although there is little right in base action (9)
13. Getting the news about X is encouraging (10)
14. Entertainments certain in their appeals (9)
16. Queen has been mixed up with Eric (8)
18. English spread themselves about on the beach (7)
20. There is nothing right in fighting or cheating (7)
21. Writer in lead (6)
24. Turn out to be a sportswoman (5)
25. Network in which a girl endlessly follows me (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1417



Prizewinners to 1417

Mr Aspley (Abingdon, Oxon.)
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For job description and application form please send s.a.e. to:
The Personnel Office
War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE
Closing date for applications – 25 November 1983

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Administrator wanted for busy Trade Union Support Unit office in Hackney. The job involves taking the main responsibility for administration and organising the work of the office: including typing, basic book-keeping, and setting up information systems. Some design and publicity skills would be useful. The Unit works directly with the local Trades Union Council and a large number of trade union organisations. The job will also involve providing the administrative back-up for this work

The job is funded by the GLC Industry and Employment Committee

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GERHARD VON SCHNEHEN, teacher and Berufsverbot (witch-hunt) victim in West Germany will speak and answer your questions on Wed. 2 Nov. 6.30 p.m. at the House of Commons, SW1 (ask for Mr J. Lamond's Committee Room).

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sun. 30 Oct. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'Reincarnation & Karma'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

CRITIQUE MEETING

AMERICAN POWER and SOVIET THREAT?

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Chair: Ahmad Ghotbi
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Prospectus and full details from: **David Rundle, The Director, British Institute, Lungarno Guicciardini 9, FLORENCE. Tel: 010-39 55 284 031.**

CONTACTS

WEAK CHESS PLAYER seeks similar for possible weekly chess game. Camden area. Box 6831.

BOOKS/ PUBLICATIONS

RELIGION FOR AGNOSTICS. Buddhism is a religion without god, whose philosophy of transcendence is compatible with science. For a non-mystical account read Western Buddhist magazine. Enquiries: Western Buddhist (Dept 5), 30 Hollingbourne Gardens, Ealing, London W13 8EN.

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion St, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822.

YOUR BOOK published and sold by a British Publisher. Details: New Horizon (NS), 25 Station Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex.

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LISTINGS

FRI 28 OCTOBER

LONDON 2-day National Conf. to mark VSO 25th Anniversary. Spkrs incl Jonathan Dimbleby, Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, Frank Judd at Commonwealth Institute. **Details: Dave Burnap, VSO, 9 Belgrave Sq, SW1. 01-235 5191.**

SAT 29 OCTOBER

LONDON Social Event to commemorate first 50 years of The Marx Memorial Library. 7.30pm at Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road. Food, drink, entertainment. **Tickets 50p from Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, EC1 (01-253 1485).**

SOUTHWARK One World Health Fair 2-5pm Pitt Street Settlement, 189 East Surry Grove, SE15. Videos, crafts and books, food, creche. Evening Social and Disco. 8-11pm £2/£1 unwaged, children 50p. Bar, creche. **Advance tickets from Southwark World Development Group 01-703 0331 or at door 2pm onwards.**

LONDON 'Interested in going to China?' – Talks, slideshow, panel of travel experts. 2.30-5.30pm St Pancras Church House, Lancing St, NW1. **Details: SACU (Soc. for Anglo-Chinese Understanding) 01-267 9841.**

LONDON 'Cuba – Che and Camilo Celebration' 2-5.30pm. Presentation by 1983 Jose Marti Brigade, slides, workshops on women, education, health, discn. 5.30pm Film: 'Cuba va' by Felix Greene. 7.30pm Social Evening, Cuban music, bar, food, bookstall. Adm £1/50p unwaged. **Org Britain-Cuba Resource Centre, c/o 29 Islington Park St, N1.**

LONDON Protest March – British Companies out of Namibia. Assemble 1.30pm Bressenden Pl, SW1. Rally 3.30pm Jubilee Gardens (next to County Hall) SE1. **Details: Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Selous St, NW1 01-387 7966 or Namibia Support Committee, 53 Leverton St, NW5 01-267 1941.**

LONDON Benefit for SWAPO 7.30pm Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1. Tickets £3.50/£1.50 unwaged. **Details City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, BM Box City AA WC1N 3XX. 01-837 6050.**

SUN 30 OCTOBER

LONDON Dawn to Dusk Vigil and Hunger Strike in Hawley St, NW1 to commemorate 'Political Prisoners' Day' in the Soviet Union, coupled with the name of Mikhail Kukobaka. **Org Hampstead Unitarians Group of Amnesty International Reeve Berman, Flat 2, 28 Chesterton Gdns, NW3 01-794 2266/Caroline Pecover, 28 Connaught Mans, Prince of Wales Dr, SW11 01-223 2115.**

MON 31 OCTOBER

LONDON Seminar on Working with Unemployed Young People. Led by Rex Hall, Unemployment Specialist, ILEA Youth Service. 5-7pm Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre, 51 Argyle St, WC1. All welcome. **Details: Spencer Hudson, Camden Council of Social Service 01-388 2071.**

LONDON Protest outside CEGB HQ, Newgate St, EC1. 1-2pm. **Org City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, BM Box City AA WC1N 3XX. 01-837 6050.**

TUES 1 NOVEMBER

LONDON Education for Peace – What does it mean and how can we put it into practice. Spkrs John McConnell, Peace Education Officer for Quaker Peace and Service, Jan Woolt, Teacher, memb. of Haringey Teachers for Peace and the NUT. 7.30pm St Vedast, Foster La, EC2. **Org. Peace Education Project, 6 Endsleigh St, WC1. 01-387 5501.**

LONDON The Communist Tradition on Ireland, No. 4. 1969-'75. Civil Rights Movement and the rise of the Provisional IRA. 7.30pm Camden Labour Club, Carol St, NW1. **Org. RCG c/o FRFI, BM Box 4835, WC1N 3XX.**

LONDON 'Unemployment and human potential' – first of 6-wk. course 10.30-12.30 at Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Sq, WC1. 01-837 7711.

WARWICK Disarmament and the Law series of lectures open to the public adm. free. 'Legal Aspects of Demonstrations' Spkr Paul O'Higgins, Fellow, Christ's College, Cambridge. 7.30pm Arts Centre Conference Room, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL. 0203 24011.

WED 2 NOVEMBER

LONDON 'Peacemaking in the 21st Century', 3rd in Lecture Series 'Global 2000'. Spkr Prof. Adam Curle, former Prof. of Peace Studies at Bradford University. St James's Piccadilly. 6.30pm Entrance donation 50p. **Org. Dunamis, 197 Piccadilly, W1. 01-437 6851.**

LONDON 'Scotland' – 3rd in series 'The Marxist Tradition in Britain. Spkr Jach Ashton. 7.30-9.30pm Marx House, Clerkenwell Green, EC1.

LONDON 'Revolution by Consent' Peter Newsam, Chairman of Commission for Racial Equality. 7pm North Westminster Community School, Penfold St, NW1. **Tickets free from Lecture Secretary 01-262 8000, Ext 310.**

THURS 3 NOVEMBER

LONDON Homelessness in London: a Social and Economic Analysis Lunch-hour Lecture by Dr Kerry E. Schott. 1.20pm Darwin Theatre, University College, Gower Street, WC1.

LONDON 'Breaking Down the Barriers – an integrated Approach to Education for Adults'. Inaugural Conf. The Open College of South London. **Details: Marie Godfrey, Manor House, 58 Clapham Common Northside, SW4. 01-228 2015.**

LONDON 'The poet is dead' tribute to Michael Smith 1954-83. 7pm Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, SW2. Tickets £2 (refreshments available) from **CFL, 165 Railton Road, SE24 01-737 2074.**

FRI 4 NOVEMBER

LONDON Peter Sedgwick Memorial Evening – a social gathering with readings from his letters, articles. Food/drink. All who miss Peter welcome. 7pm October Gallery, 24 Old Gloucester St, Queen Square, WC1. **Details: Richard Kuper, Pluto Press, The Works, 105a Torriano Ave, NW5. 01-482 1973.**

LONDON Grand Diwali Dinner Dance in aid of Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College set up in Tanzania by African National Congress. Music by 'Goldust'. Bar. Adm. £5. 7pm-12.30am at Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, W2. Tickets from D. Iyer, 63 Natal Rd, SW16, 01-677 3334/T. Vassen, 71 Strathyre Ave, SW16 01-679 3106. **Org. ANC S. London Unit, PO Box 38, 28 Penton St, N1. 01-837 2012.**

BIRMINGHAM Public Meeting Birmingham Nuclear Freeze Council. 7.30pm Digbeth Civic Hall.

FORTHCOMING

5 NOV LONDON Second London Labour Movement Conference on Esperanto. 10.30-4pm County Hall, SE1.

5 NOV LONDON 'The Future of the NHS and Prevention of Ill-health' – Autumn Conf. of Campaign for the Prevention of Ill health, Socialist Health Assoc. 10am-5pm Mary Ward Hall, 9 Tavistock Pl, WC1. Spkrs incl. Neil Kinnock, MP, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Gen Sec NUPE. Coffee, tea, bring packed lunch. **Tickets £3/£1 unwaged from SHA, 195 Walworth Rd, SE17 01-703 6838.**

5 NOV LONDON Official Opening of SHA New Offices. 7pm 195 Walworth Rd, SE17. Buffet Supper. Spkrs Eric Heffer MP, Gwyneth Dunwoody. Tickets £5 from above.

5 NOV GUILDFORD 'Women into Politics' workshop and dayschool on TV and interview techniques. Fee £15 incl snack lunch. Guildford Inst University of Surrey, Ward St. **Details and study pack: Juliet Clark, Dept of Educational Studies, University of Surrey, Guildford 571281, Ext 877/620.**

7 NOV NOTTINGHAM 'Is Just War Theory Relevant Today?' – first in series of Nottingham Peace Lectures. Spkr April Carter, Somerville College, Oxford Univ 4.15pm Social Science Bld, Nottinham University. **Details: 0602 56101.**

9 NOV LONDON 'Humanism – the way forward' talk by Dr James Hemming. 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Adm free. **Details: James Young 01-609 2042 days.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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BRIGHTON: ATTRACTIVE, independent, lively, warm, sensuous lecturer (f. 36), seeks caring male counterpart (preferably solvent, non-smoker), to share time, travel, talk and my bottle of wine. Box 6851.

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EXCEPTIONALLY TALL, financial consultant, 38, affectionate, secure, unhappily married, needs understanding girl, for warmth and solace. Marital status unimportant. Phone no. Sm. photo appreciated. London. Box 6666.

FEMALE GRADUATE (mid thirties), teacher and social worker, seeks male companion, political, intellectual and cultural interests. Based London. Box 6837.

FEMALE MUSICIAN, 32, single, seeks intelligent male friend, to share music, theatre, philosophy. Interest in E. European and Asian cultures. Any nationality. Phone no. please. Box 6844.

FEMALE GRADUATE, 37, independent, people-minded, would like to meet warm, intelligent male, share interests and friendship. Likes arts, travel, current affairs. Dislikes inequality, racism. Merseyside. Box 6843.

GAY ACOLYTE seeks enlightenment, confluence with tender mature accomplished dramatist/author, needing companionship, care and affection, now and always. Sincerely – Peter. Box 6838.

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MALE GRADUATE, 25, Israeli origin, London based, pleasant, thoughtful, seeks open-minded thoughtful and co-operative female, 18-28, preferably left-wing, for serious friendship. Box 6832.

MALE, 28, non-smoker, no Prince Charming, but fit, friendly, articulate and available, seeks female friendship in London area. Box 6833.

MANCHESTER MALE, 36, socialist, professional, non-smoker, 5ft 8in, interests: arts, politics, like to meet independent, intelligent female. Box 6758.

MANCHESTER-BASED, ATTRACTIVE, mature but lonely male graduate (23), single, 5ft 6in, seeks kind, sincere lady (18-30) for fun, frolics and friendship. Box 6816.

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MANCHESTER: QUIET, professional man, 42, tall, sensitive, wishes to meet lady, for theatre, outings, who ideally lives south Manchester or Cheshire. Box 6840.

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MIDDLE-AGED MAN with ever-widening interests, hopes to meet a woman, who will share exploration of life and widen his interests further. Box 6853.

PHOTOGRAPHY TUTOR, 50s, would like to share his enthusiasms for cinema, symphonies, psychotherapies, cycling and perhaps, if mutually agreeable, procreation with youthful lady. London. Box 6849.

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER, 29, excellent background, attractive, stimulating personality, needs a lady, purpose serious relationship perhaps marriage. Box 6776.

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